Christian Courier

52nd Year of Publication

September 13, 1996/No. 2500

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CHRISTIAN COURIER SEP 16 1996
PER/BX/9401/.C36

Council and business group speak out against video lottery terminals

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) and the Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF) have taken strong stands against Bill 75, a controversial Ontario bill that would allow video lottery terminals (VLTs) to be installed in racetracks and charity casinos this fall.

If the legislation is approved, Ontario will become the ninth province in Canada to allow VLTs. At present, B.C. is the only other province that does not permit them. The Ontario plan would see VLTs introduced to bars and restaurants at a later date.

In a kind of backhanded admission that VLTs have negative effects, Ontario proposes to dedicate two per cent of revenues from 20,000 terminals across the province (estimated to be $9 million a year) to addiction recovery and avoidance through public information campaigns. Another 10 per cent of profits would go to charities.

CC FILES

Slot machines aren't enough. Eight provinces have VLTs too.

Reinder Klein, research and communications associate with CCRCC, spoke on the council's behalf at public hearings on Bill 75 on August 7. After seeing the list of other people making presentations that day, Klein commented, "When I first looked at the names I got the impression I was at a convention of thieves grubbing over who got what of the loot." Other presenters included representatives of racetracks, casinos and motels. "I was surprised that there were not other church groups," said Klein. But he expressed relief to find that CCBF had also spoken to the Bill 75 hearings in late August.

Klein described VLTs as "very similar to traditional slot machines." Users either pay the proprietor or "run a tab." Bill 75 prohibits anyone under age 19 from using VLTs, but Klein says, "It's not made clear how that is to be regulated. I can't imagine the government hiring police [to regulate the 20,000 machines]." Most likely, owners of restaurants and bars with VLTs would decide who could use them, said Klein.

A sorry business

In his presentation, Klein mentioned that in August 1993 he had spoken out against the former NDP government's Bill 8, which approved licensing of casinos in Ontario.

"Our response to the intent of Bill 75 now under discussion differs little from the thrust of our earlier brief," explained Klein. "We hereby once more express our deep dismay about the government's active and ongoing involvement in the sorry business of gambling."

Klein criticized the govern-

See **VLTs** *page 2...*

Calgary church provides 'pepper' for the unchurched and over-churched

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — Westside King's Church is the kind of church that garners attention. In two short years it has gone from 70 members to more than 850. And it has just opened a new Christian arts school.

With two packed Sunday morning services at 9:31 a.m. and 11:11 a.m., it is now planning a Saturday evening service, perhaps in October, at no one knows what time. Not bad for a church that meets in a former curling rink, the ugliest church in the city.

But what it lacks in decor and appearance, the King's Church makes up for in energy, enthusiasm and a place where people feel safe and welcome. It's the kind of place that plays a segment from "Mr. Bean," the British television comedian to illustrate a sermon, and that breaks for coffee half way through a service.

But Westside's main selling point is grace and acceptance. "I'm really grateful I'm in a church community in which people accept me where I am and don't want to force me along the way," says Colette Dejordy, a Quebec native who had not attended church for almost 25 years before joining Westside King's almost two years ago.

Alright to be yourself

She remembers one Sunday morning several months ago when she woke up in a foul mood. "I felt just awful. My immediate thought was I don't want to go to church today; I don't want to talk to people." Then Dejordy remembered she attends Westside and it was OK to go there and be herself.

"That's something that we need, and search for, and don't often find."

Westside pastor Tom Morris says it's a church for the "unchurched," those like Dejordy, who didn't attend church — and the "over-churched," people burnt out by traditional approaches to Christianity.

Dejordy, for instance, stopped going to church in her mid-teens because she associated it with sin, shame and guilt. She began to re-examine her spiritual bearings after becoming involved in a 12-step program.

Dejordy and her common-law husband ended up at Westside after a friend invited them along. Coming out of a church in which ritual is important, initially Dejordy felt uncomfortable in the emotional, arm-waving, exuberant worship service at Westside.

But the very thing that initially made her uncomfortable is now the thing that she most welcomes. "You can feel the presence of God in the room," she says. After a few weeks, Dejordy's discomfort disappeared. It's been her church home ever since.

The church community even accepted the fact that Dejordy and her partner were not married. Even though Dejordy knew the church considered it important for a couple to be in a covenant relationship, they were accepted as they were until they married three months ago.

Pastor Morris, who used the segment from "Mr. Bean" to

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News

Video lotteries criticized as highly addictive

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ment for being "quite ready to abandon traditional values and sound principles in favor of mere financial gain and narrow political ends."

Klein pointed out seven reasons why VLTs are a bad idea:

• They are highly addictive. In part, this is because their outcome is immediate. In lottery gambling there is a time lag between a ticket purchase and the announced results, but the outcome of VLT play is instantaneous. This makes another try possible at once, and highly enticing.

• Their wide and easy accessibility encourages broad participation. Given the highly addictive nature of video gambling, wide participation is bound to result in extensive and ultimately very expensive levels of addiction.

•VLTs are user-friendly. With the action occurring strictly between player and screen, external constraints are minimal while the activity itself suppresses ethical considerations.

CC FILES

Reinder Klein

• Computers appeal to the young. Young adults raised on computer games will quickly be roped into extremely addictive, lose-lose patterns of behavior.

• VLTs feed the hunger for quick-fix solutions to complex problems.

• VLTs democratize gambling. Klein told the hearing, "Passage of Bill 75 will ensure that all sectors of Ontario's society, without discrimination in terms of income, bank balance or even geographic location, can be induced to part with some or all of their money."

• VLTs denigrate honest work by signalling that money need not be earned through diligence, skill and commitment; just play the VLT game.

Not about charity

Klein concluded, "We do not see anything positive, constructive or even remotely helpful to the people of Ontario in the proposed introduction of video lotteries. Quite the contrary. We consider the government's participation in gambling, including its involvement in VLTs, to be essentially deceitful and fundamentally unjust, for gamblers invariably lose.... This bill is not about funding charities; it is about securing legislative approval for another highly questionable way used by the government of Ontario to raise money." Klein urged the government to withdraw the bill.

On August 29, the Canadian Christian Business Federation made a written submission to the Ontario government criticizing Bill 75. In a press release, CCBF president Hans Vander Stoep stated the group's opposition to gambling in any form because it "holds the elusive promise of something better almost within reach."

VLTs are an especially bad influence because "the player can immediately continue the pursuit of the elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. This is what makes this type of gambling the worst. The instant gratification, the ability to cash in the voucher and continue playing only facilitates addiction."

CCBF criticized the government for "exploiting society's most vulnerable while nurturing the perception that money can be acquired by means other than honest work. This demeans work as the way to make a living and the responsibility to provide for one's needs and the needs of one's family and community."

Diverts money

CCBF also criticized VLTs because gambling diverts money from small businesses. "Every dollar going to gambling does not buy any product, does not create any employment," stated Vander Stoep. "All that dollar does is give 10 cents to the bar where the VLT is located and 10 cents to a charity. The balance, 80 cents, goes directly to the government." Government's main task is to create a climate for healthy economic activity, stated Vander Stoep.

Calgary church seeks to be relevant in 1990s

... continued from page 1

illustrate the alienating atmosphere of many church services, uses practically any technological trick in the book to help people connect with God.

Morris, 41, came to faith in Jesus Christ during a drug rehabilitation program in Montreal in his teens.

'Peppering' Calgary

Apart from his grammar, Morris loves acrostics, a composition in which the initial letter of each line when taken together spells a word. Morris thinks people remember better when he uses acrostics. Ask him about Westside Church and he explains, "Pepper":

* **P***assion for God's glory.*
* **E***xcellence in all we are and do.*
* **P***eople in community.*
* **P***rocessing the healing grace of God.*
* **E***vangelism and mission.*
* **R***elevance to our city and world.*

Those are the core values against which everything that happens at Westside is measured. They're evident everywhere.

There's the Passion in everything from the greeting at the door, to the upbeat, contemporary music featuring keyboards, acoustic guitar, drums, sax and clarinet that sets the tempo for worship.

There's the emphasis on Excellence, from the decision to buy a $13,000 computerized projector to better convey Morris's messages, to the new Westside School of the Arts opening this fall that aims at developing everyone's artistic gifts.

There's the focus on People, whether they're attending the small cell groups that meet in private homes during the week, or coming from across city to its location in Calgary's southwest corner for the informal, laid back, coffee-gulping Sunday morning worship.

They Process the grace of God by endeavoring to accept every person as he or she is, and by engaging people in the Abba program, a 12-step recovery program open to everyone, regardless of their background.

Boomers and busters

The emphasis on Evangelism and mission is clearly found in Westside's efforts to reach the "unchurched" and "overchurched," along with its youth ministry which operates The Cave, a place where teenagers can hang out on weekends and have some good, clean fun.

Finally, the fledgling church, comprising mostly baby boomers and busters, wants to be Relevant by seeing life through the eyes of ordinary Calgarians in the mid-1990s. Sermons are delivered with an understanding that some may be unfamiliar with church talk and Christian terminology.

Don't exist to 'make saints happy'

The King's Church wants to be a safe place to invite friends, where religion won't be forced on anybody.

"We try to look at life through the grid of a typical Calgarian who may not have met the Lord or who believes in God but doesn't know a community to connect with," Morris says. Those values are underlined by the fact that rather than having a church board, they have a "servants' council." Without comprising their biblical beliefs, Morris puts considerable emphasis on God's grace or unconditional love, acceptance and unmerited favor.

"We're not running a program to keep the saints happy. We're building community that the unchurched can relate to. By processing the grace in our lives, we want to lower the doorstep of the church so people won't bump their heads when they come in." People are accepted where they are in their spiritual journey, recognizing that everyone is different. Toxic faith and spiritual abuse are replaced with support and encouragement.

"We are not asking for perfection; we're asking for growth. It's an ongoing process where people take ownership for their own spiritual growth. That's why it's important to enjoy the journey."

True to her church's mission, Karen Sudds has a passion for excellence, with a desire to see the artistic and performing arts raised to a new level of excellence within the Christian church.

At one time, of course, the Christian church fostered some of Western civilization's finest masterpieces. In recent times, however, more often than not it has contented itself with mediocrity. The arts are an afterthought.

"There seems to be an attitude that it's okay to offer things that are shoddy or not very good because we're Christians," says Sudds, a dance instructor who performs liturgical dance at Westside King's. "That's not alright," says Sudds, who formed the Christian Dance Fellowship of Canada in 1990. "If you really believe that God has [given gifts to] people, then you have to give them a chance to use those gifts so they will flourish."

Open to anyone

With that in mind, Westside has established the Westside School of the Arts, with classes in dance, voice, guitar, keyboard, graphic arts, theatre arts, visual arts (drawing and painting) and ballroom dance. It's a "mentor" program that emphasizes the development of an individual's talent and personality. It's open to anyone, child to adult with the desire and ability to further develop their talent.

Sudds says creative ability is a spiritual gift. There is a need for excellence in ministry art forms. The church wants to enhance the student's technical and spiritual growth by using biblically based recreational and professional instruction.

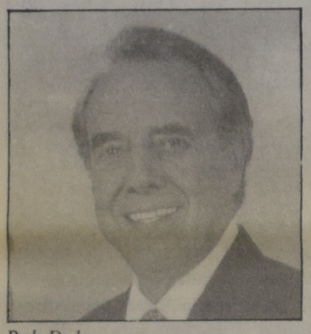
"The church has not understood the artist's art and the world has not understood their faith. A lot of Christian artists find themselves in a vacuum."

News/Politics

American survey finds Dole fails to attract born-again voters

OXNARD, Calif. (EP) — If Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole is still trailing U.S. President Clinton in the polls, it may be because he's failed to connect with a key constituency within his own party — evangelicals, fundamentalists, born-again Christians, members of the "religious right." A new survey of registered voters conducted by the Barna Research Group found that Dole's support among this important voting block is lukewarm, at best.

In recent presidential elections, born-again and evangelical Christians have been one of the most cohesive voting blocks.



CC FILES

Bob Dole

But according to the new poll — taken before the Republican convention — that could change this year. Among born-again voters the race was almost even: Clinton was preferred by 39 per cent while Dole was the favorite of 38 per cent.

The born-again constituency represents two-fifths of the U.S. electorate. Evangelicals, a high-profile subset of the born-again population, chose the Republican challenger by a three to one margin (55 per cent to 17 per cent). However, only eight per cent of the adult public are evangelical.

Clinton held a two-to-one lead over Dole among those whose beliefs do not classify them as born-again Christians (50 per cent vs. 27 per cent).

'Religious Right' split evenly

One of the most surprising findings was that among voters who identified themselves as part of the Religious Right — a group that constitutes one-quarter of registered voters — Clinton was just slightly ahead.

Equally surprising was the fact that among those claiming to be religious fundamentalists Clinton was the choice by a 44 per cent to 33 per cent margin — less than the margin within the population overall, but the opposite of what might be expected given the ideological leanings of the two major-party candidates.

George Barna, whose company conducted the survey, says, "In the last four presidential elections the conservative Republican candidates garnered three-quarters of the conservative religious vote. Mr. Dole's tendency to create a 'big tent,' inclusive party environment has not endeared him to born-again voters, while Mr. Clinton has become more aggressive in promoting 'family values' as a means of connecting with this group. If Mr. Dole does not carry the born-again group by a substantial margin, then he can start making his retirement plans."

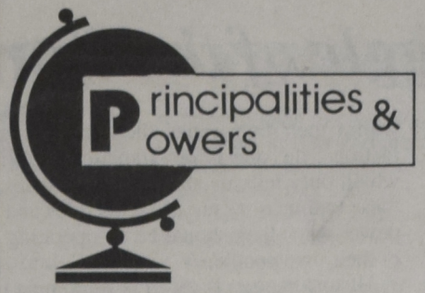
Misunderstanding of Christians' allegiances

Barna also noted that there is widespread misunderstanding about the political leanings of born-again adults. The survey showed that born-again Christians are equally likely to be registered Democrats as Republicans (42 per cent each). Adults who attend Protestant churches are also equally likely to register as Democrats or Republicans. Most of the born-again Christians affiliated with the Republican Party describe themselves as politically conservative while a majority of the born-again Christians registered as Democrats say they are politically moderate. Barna indicated that the political profile of Christians has remained unchanged throughout this decade.

38 per cent committed to Jesus

In Barna's survey, "born-again Christians" refers not to people who call themselves born again, but to individuals who say they have confessed their sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Overall, 38 per cent of the adult population meet these criteria; 43 per cent of registered voters fit this definition.

"Evangelicals" refers to a subset of the born-again population. For the survey, the term refers to those who are born-again Christians and who say the Bible is totally accurate in its teachings; that they have a personal responsibility to evangelize; that Jesus Christ was not a sinner, that Satan is a real being; and that a person cannot earn their way into heaven. Eight per cent of American adults meet these criteria; seven per cent of all registered voters have evangelical beliefs.



David T. Koyzis

Must government legally define marriage?

Does government have the right, or even the competence, to define marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman? This question arises because of increasing calls for the state to recognize homosexual partnerships as marriages. Denmark currently recognizes such "marriages," and the courts in Hawaii may soon move to open the legal definition of marriage to include same-sex unions.

Many argue that restricting marriage to heterosexual unions unfairly discriminates against homosexuals. The argument in favor of ending an apparently discriminatory practice is appealing to many. Ultimately, however, it is not fully persuasive and ignores the fact that every community, by virtue of being a community, places boundaries around itself.

If, to take an admittedly farfetched example, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra were to apply for a marriage licence, the government must decide whether this community qualifies. In other words, it cannot refrain from making at least an implicit judgment concerning the structure and definition of a marriage. In this case, the Toronto Symphony is not a sexual union between two persons who have pledged their lifelong troth to each other. Thus the government is obligated to turn down its application. Has the government discriminated? Of course. Has it unfairly done so? Most people would say it has not.

Crucial missing ingredients

If, further, two men or two women were to apply for a marriage licence, the government must once again judge whether they qualify. Such partners are obviously closer than the Toronto Symphony is to being a marriage, yet something rather crucial is missing. Biological complementarity and the concomitant possibility of reproduction are not present, as they are in a heterosexual union. As James W. Skillen affirms, "Public justice begins with the correct identification of things." Skillen further argues that a longterm homosexual relationship should be classified as a type of friendship and ought not to be confused with a marriage, which has a different normative structure. "Homosexual friendships can be given proper public recognition and protection without mistakenly attaching the name of marriage to some of them."

There is probably something to be said in favor of assigning some sort of legal status to same-sex partnerships, though I personally believe that the sexual side of such relationships remains outside the will of God as revealed in Scripture. However, given that in the real world people do live in such relationships, it may be wise to grant them some form of regular status as a general hedge against promiscuity and as a protection of the partners themselves. This could well include the extension of the employment benefits of one partner to the other.

State must say what is, isn't marriage

Nevertheless, even if some form of homosexual partnership were to receive legal recognition, the belief in some quarters that it should be treated identically to a marriage is in error. There are obviously ways in which the two relationships are comparable, and they can thus be treated comparably in some measure for legal purposes. But marriage entails responsibilities that are not intrinsic to a homosexual friendship, among which are those relating to the birth and upbringing of children. To treat friendship and marriage identically would be to do an injustice to marriage as a distinct institution with its own calling in God's world.

Marriage has, of course, taken on many different forms down through the millennia. But it is not infinitely malleable. At some point efforts to redefine it beyond its normative limits will cause it to become something else entirely. Government is thus inescapably obligated, under God's call to do public justice, to pass judgment on what qualifies and does not qualify as a marriage.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., and figures he is entitled to write at least one controversial column every year.

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Editorial

The hopeless struggle of the Kurds continues

The Kurds are getting it in the neck again, this time from Iraq. This hapless people, inhabiting four neighboring countries — Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq — have once again been subjected to displacement and killing of many of their Iraqi brothers and sisters. The world heard about the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Kurds by Turk forces during World War I (1914-18). In 1925 Turkey crushed a Kurdish attempt to gain independence.

Historically, the Kurds have never been a nation, although their region is called Turkistan; but they were promised such status after World War I . It never happened. Now the population of 22 million continues to straddle the borders of four countries, and any future recognition of independence is highly unlikely. Gaining independence would mean loss of territory for four countries, all of them Muslim, but not all on friendly terms with each other.

The enemy is within

Poor Kurds? Yes and no. The fact that they're not an independent country is largely due to the fact that within their own ranks there are two main hostile factions: the one is pro-Iranian; the other pro-Iraqi, which only tells us about their alliances. In essence, these two factions are tribal enemies and compete for power when they should be co-operating for the good of their own people.

History repeats itself. It is seldom an outside force that destroys a people. Usually it is internal strife and tribalism that takes care of that. Witness what has happened in Rwanda, Burundi, Somali, the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Liberia and other countries refusing to be healed.

Every inclination is evil

The situation is no different today than it was from the beginning of time. Think of what God said to himself when the Flood had receded. After God called Noah and his family and the animals out of the ark, he looked at the whole situation and decided not to send another flood, "even though every inclination of [the human] heart is evil from childhood."

God realized that the Flood was only a temporary solution because, although Noah had shown great faithfulness and trust, his example would not be followed by all his descendants. Perhaps a few family quarrels in the narrow quarters of the ark during the year that the family was locked up convinced God of that. The seeds of tribalism had been sown.

God realized that he could not continue to destroy all living creatures. Besides, it hurt him too much.

But in a sense, God does not have to send a major flood again. The evil inclination of people's hearts takes care of a good deal of destruction on the face of the earth.

Summer and winter

But because of God's grace and love for humankind, "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." The rifles will keep on sputtering and the missiles will keep on exploding, but the earth will keep on producing, and the dove will keep on coming back with a fresh olive branch in its beak..., until the final curtain of this old creation comes down.

Will humanity ever learn? God's insight and the testimony of history says no. Only where his sovereign love stirs people up to self-denial will shalom be evident.

If only the Kurds would turn to his Son and be reconciled. **BW**

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as it:

- ***— reports on significant happenings in the Christian community and the world;***
- ***— expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective;***
- ***— provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.***

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L2W 1A1, Canada
Tel: (905) 682-8311; fax: (905) 682-8313

School is not for everyone

I asked two kids whether or not they were looking forward to going back to school. The one said enthusiastically yes; the other one said it was okay. The answer of the first came from a girl who loves school and does well. The other came from a boy whose favorite subject is physical education and recess. I have an idea that a month into the school year the boy will be longing for summer holidays.

Not everyone is suited for school life. I wish some kids could attend school only for the morning session and be productively busy in the afternoon with whatever fits them better.

James Hillman in *The Soul's Code* refers to a report that says that of 400 famous persons, three-fifths had serious school problems. "Rejection of the classroom is an international phenomenon and has little to do with whether the schools are public, private, secular or clerical.... Hating school, failing school, expulsion from school afflicts all sorts, for better or for worse."

That is a sobering reality for parents and teachers alike. It is good to recognize that schools can be difficult places for some students. Such students need a lot of empathy and encouragement. Above all, they need to know that their worth cannot be measured by grades.

Schools need to be first of all places where differences are accepted. **BW**

All word streams flow into the sea of CC readers

This is issue number 2500! What a nice round figure. It sounds like a milestone, although it is a bit of a hard sell to announce it as something deserving a lot of pomp and ceremony, especially after we celebrated our 50th anniversary last year. So we won't make a big deal out of it. But we could not let this marker go without comment.

If you divide the number 2,500 by 51 years, you get 49 issues per year. That sounds about right since we never ran 52 issues per year. Think of it, 2,500 issues. That means 2,500 editorials. I would venture to say that we have some readers who have read all or almost all of those editorials. Let's say that in those 2,500 issues there was an average of three letters to the editor. That's 7,500 letters. I wonder how many of those letters were written out of love?

If one of our present issues is representative of previous issues, then there appeared about 25 articles in each issue for a total of 62,500 articles over the 51 years. And if 1,200 words per page is a good average, and the average issue has 20 pages, the total number of words written over that length of time would be 60 million.

I wonder what Solomon would say about this. "Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips"? "Of making many books [and newspapers] there is no end, and much study wearies the body"? "'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Teacher. 'Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless'"?

We may as well go to the end of the book of Ecclesiastes and hear the conclusion of the matter: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

So that's it, folks. In and of itself 2,500 issues is meaningless. Unless the Lord builds the readership, the workers at CC work in vain.

A downer, you say? No, not really. A sober evaluation of a kingdom enterprise. Let's raise a glass of celebration. Cheers! **BW**

Letters

The real problem is human sexuality

I, too, read with appreciation the four articles on homosexuality in the July 12 issue. However, the letter that appeared in the August 16 issue is the one that has prompted me to write. I grieve for and sympathize with the wife and mother who wrote. She has been severely hurt and sinned against by her former husband who felt he had to celebrate and give expression to his new lifestyle.

She ends her letter with an important statement: "I just wanted you and Rem Kooistra to know that there is another side to this debate." As correct as this statement is, it doesn't go far enough and that's the matter I'd like to address. I realize that your intention in printing the four articles was to see if "other ministers [have] changed their minds on homosexuality" since the 1973 synodical report came out.

It is not the 1973 report that presents the problem in 1996, in my opinion. My difficulty is that neither that synod nor any since has addressed the real problem facing the church today. Homosexuality is only part of the problem. The real problem is human sexuality. The Christian Reformed Church in North America has not developed a theology of human sexuality.

Sexuality is more complex

The wife and mother who wrote to you said her husband promoted his "bi-sexual/homosexual" lifestyle. This misuse of terminology explains exactly what I mean. A bi-sexual, by definition, is a sexual orientation where the person desires to have sexual relations with either males or females. To say that a bi-sexual is also a homosexual is a contradiction of terms. The homosexual's orientation is toward members of his or her own sex.

In general, we in the CRCNA have oversimplified human sexuality. We tend to go back to the creation statement "Male and female he created them," without trying to identify what is meant. Does "male and female" refer only to Adam and Eve or to all humankind? Does it refer to their biological/genital organs or to their genetic/chromosomal characteristics? Does it refer to their gender, that is, how they and their descendants perceived themselves as sexual persons? Does it include their orientation? After all it is a biological reality that children are born today with varying chromosomal patterns, indeterminate sexual organs, or androgen insensitivity. How does the church apply the terms "male and female" to them?

It seems to me that within the church in 1996 we use the words "male and female" without defining them and, therefore, we confuse sexual organs with genetic chromosomes with gender with sexual orientation, with the result that we are unable to minister meaningfully to people in this disordered world.

Male and female do not mean the same things to all people. Thus, we really need to go back to the drawing board and develop a meaningful theology on human sexuality.

The report of 1973 only addresses the homosexual problem and the 1996 Synod wants us to develop ways of ministering to homosexuals. What about our ministry to bi-sexuals, to transsexuals, to androgenous persons, to asexuals, to all persons regardless of their sexuality? In other words we need to develop ways to minister to all those for whom the terms male and female have varying degrees of ambiguity.

This long-overdue approach would help resolve the unresolved tensions that exist in our church, in Christ's church, today.

H. Lloyd Burghart
Rimbey, Alta.

The church is wasting outreach time on non-issues

As a layperson who does read and study God's Word I have great difficulty in what's being presented in your paper through articles and replies about homosexuality. I think that our learned scholars should re-examine 2 Tim. 2:15-16 about rightly dividing the word of truth.

Pastor Nee-to-Sheng, a Christian missionary in China around the turn of the century, wrote the following about 2 Tim. 2:15:

Some of God's children lay great emphasis on rightly dividing the word of truth. Indeed Scripture tells us we are to do this, but it also tells us his Word is to divide us. Where we may be wrong is in seeking to divide his Word first, before we have allowed it to do its work on us! ...Perhaps we think it would have been better if Paul and the others had got together to provide a detailed handbook of Christian doctrines. But God did not permit this. How easily he could have settled some of our theological arguments, but it seems he loves to confuse those who only approach the Bible intellectually. He wants to preserve men from merely getting hold of doctrines. He wants his truth to get hold of them.

Have the Christian Reformed Church and other churches gone so far as to intellectually study each passage in God's Word? How is it that we have all the answers, it seems, and yet the Church is falling apart because of all the smart, not necessarily wise, men.

For 25 years the CRC wrestled with the women in office issue. Are we to spend the next 25 years agonizing about the sexuality issue? What the gay community wants is called fornication. I also see in my Bible the word "emulations," which means to outdo one another. Is this why so many learned pastors jump on the bandwagon?

Why are we making such a fuss about two or three per cent of the population when 50 per cent or more are going straight to hell because we as the Church of Jesus Christ are too busy discussing, and even splitting up, because of issues that should never have been issues? How come we give such little time to all the single people in our churches? What about the childless couples (not by choice) or the physically challenged? These are all people who, I am sure, want to live a full life in Christ Jesus; but along come the two or three per cent who mostly live in sin, and they demand we do something about accepting them.

I have grave difficulties with that. What will we tell our young people? That it is alright to live together outside the bonds of marriage? Most of the ones living in the gay community have this intense desire to show the world they are different. Maybe we should do the same thing. All too often the world does not know where we stand. Hence the moral decay in our country.

Whatever we do, we should ask if it is profitable to God and destructive to Satan. We should not do anything if it has no power to affect the kingdom of darkness and to cause damage to the devil, our enemy.

Koop Mulder
Bracebridge, Ont.

Guest editorial relevant for artist

It's been some time since I've read an article (guest editorial, Aug. 9) of such inspired insightfulness. Please thank Agnes Kramer-Hamstra.

What impressed me most was the concise thoroughness of Agnes's critique of society done in such a loving way and concluded with a doxology!

"Our home is jealous when we put down roots in shabby places, when we become comfortable and fall asleep with wooden lovers (idols)."

That imagery is powerful and relevant particularly for me. The series of etchings I've been working on for the last number of years also deals with the comfortable/uncomfortable dicotomy of our "at homeness" in our world and society. I find myself asking many of the same questions Agnes asks: "What is home? What makes us comfortable? Where do we belong? What is community?"

May God give us the wisdom to be uncomfortable critics of our world and society but at the same time give us his comfortable lap to curl up on when we're tired.

George Langbroek
St. Catharines, Ont.

Christian Courier

An independent weekly with a Reformed perspective.
Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions: (effective Feb. 1, 1995)	**Canada** (GST incl.)	**U.S.A.** (GST free)
one year (44 issues)	$43.50	$35.00 U.S.
two years (88 issues)	$82.00	$66.00 U.S.
three years (132 issues)	$123.00	$99.00 U.S.
overseas one year	$135 airmail $85.00 surface mail	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more details.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for March 1, April 12, May 31, June 21, July 26, Aug. 23, Oct. 4 and Dec. 27, by Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited.
All correspondence should be addressed to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel.: 905-682-8311 or fax: 905-682-8313
PRINTED IN CANADA
This tabloid contains recycled paper.

Feature

Kids now can sing about the crosses row on row

Bert Witvoet

PENDER ISLAND, B.C. — The Canadian Legion took one look at Frank DeVries's musical setting of "In Flanders Fields", and decided it liked the music well enough to publish it in the 1996 Legion's Teacher's Guide. The well-known words of First World War Canadian soldier John McCrae are usually recited at Remembrance Day ceremonies. The poem first appeared in England's *Punch* magazine in December 1915.

But Frank DeVries would like to have it sung by Canadian school children. The former Christian school principal and music teacher put the poem to four-part harmony and submitted it to the agency that has the greatest interest in keeping the memory of fallen soldiers alive.

"Music has always been part of my life," writes DeVries. "I already wrote songs back in the old country." Born in Alphen aan den Rijn (central Holland), Frank immigrated to Canada in 1952 and shortly thereafter married his childhood sweetheart, Celia (they were married 43 years this past May 20).

Free lessons

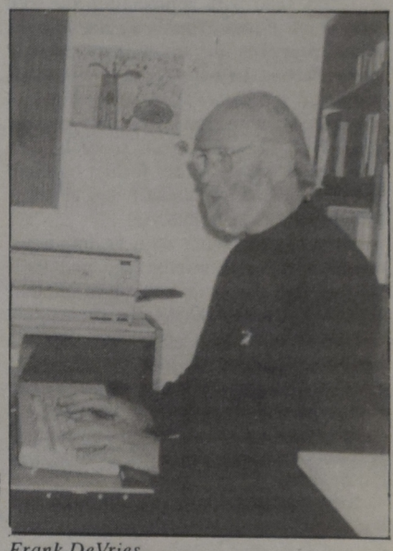
After coming to Canada, DeVries worked for the Dominion Bank in Sarnia, Ont., where he opened his own music studio. But when Imperial Oil went on strike, he started teaching music free to kids whose parents were employed at Imperial Oil, bringing his business venture to a premature end.

In 1958, DeVries moved to St. Catharines, worked in a music studio there for several years and then decided to enrol at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. This experience propelled him into a teaching career, which took him from Wyoming, Ont., to Houston, Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. DeVries retired from teaching in 1994, when he and Celia moved to Pender Island.

Close to nature

Their home is on a 100-foot cliff overlooking the ocean, "and it is not unusual to see dolphins and orcas swim by close to the shore, while seals, mink and otter play near the rocks below us and Bald Eagles fish for salmon," writes DeVries. These days he and his wife spend a lot of time on the ocean in their double kayak. All of this is hard work, says DeVries, "but somebody's got to do it!" Observation of nature has always been a fruitful endeavor for DeVries when composing new songs.

DeVries's music publishing includes a song booklet "Tiny Little Spider" (1976) and a number of songs in hymnals. Last year, he published a 90-minute audiotape "The Greatest Story Ever."



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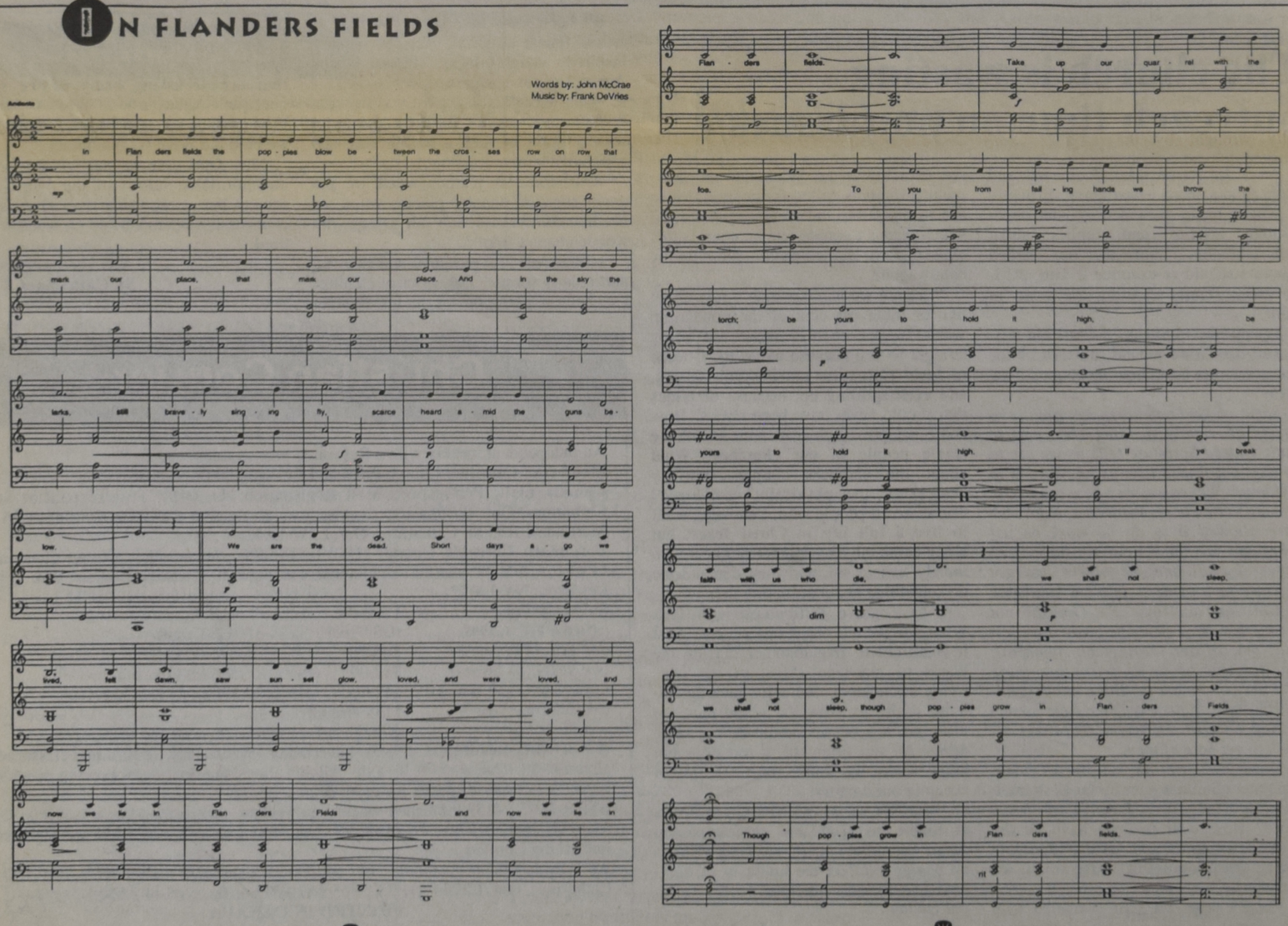
Frank DeVries


IN FLANDERS FIELDS
Words by: John McCrae
Music by: Frank DeVries
In Flan ders fields the pop - pies blow be - tween the cros - ses row on row that
mark our place, that mark our place. And in the sky the
larks, still brave - ly sing - ing fly, scarce heard a - mid the guns be -
low. We are the dead. Short days a - go we
lived, felt dawn, saw sun - set glow, loved, and were loved, and
now we lie in Flan - ders Fields and now we lie in
Flan ders fields. Take up our quar - rel with the
foe. To you from fail - ing hands we throw the
torch; be yours to hold it high, be
yours to hold it high. If ye break
faith with us who die, we shall not sleep,
we shall not sleep, though pop - pies grow in Flan - ders Fields
Though pop - pies grow in Flan - ders fields

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ARTS & MEDIA

The Talamadh, Volume 1

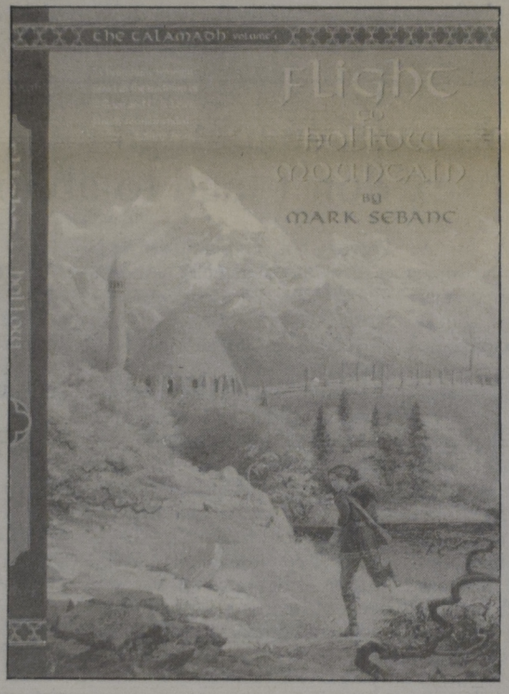
The Talamadh, Volume 1
Flight to Hollow Mountain

Mark Sebanc

Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1996. ISBN: 0-8028-3794-8. Hardcover. 402 pp. $25 (US).
Reviewed by Marian Van Til

Flight to Hollow Mountain, Volume 1 of a three-volume series called *The Talamadh*, is the beginning of a cosmic fantasy which has been likened to J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Extreme as it may seem to compare the first novel of a translator and freelance writer from Ontario to a classic work so beautifully wrought by the great medieval scholar Tolkien, the comparison is not ill-conceived.

Like Tolkien, Sebanc creates an ancient world populated not only with human beings but with dwarfs and other creatures, some sinister, some on the side of Good. Sebanc even has the audacity to call his world (Circadian) Middle Earth. Like Tolkien, he carefully devises a rich Middle Earth history, and the place and character names he uses are not idly chosen. We're also let in on words and phrases of the ancient language once spoken in this world.



A quest against cosmic evil forces

Also like Tolkien, Sebanc sets one character (Kalaquinn Wright) — and a host of supporting players — on a quest against the evil forces whose influence is seeping into the very foundation of this world. And like in Tolkien, the hero is no hero in his own eyes, he learns countless hard lessons on his journey, and his quest involves a specific object (a harp — the Talamadh — instead of a ring).

Like Tolkien was, Sebanc is a Catholic well-versed in theology and philosophy; and he has more than a passing interest in things medieval (he just completed a book-length study of St. Gregory of Nyssa by Hans Urs von Balthasar).

No rip-off

Given all that, one might be forgiven for wondering if Sebanc's work is a rip-off of Tolkien's. The happy answer is No. While Sebanc's intended trilogy (the other two volumes are still to come) has those ostensible similarities to Tolkien's great trilogy (which was originally one volume), it is a satisfyingly original work.

The story, while not as intricately detailed as Tolkien's, is complex enough to warrant the three projected volumes, yet straightforward enough to make for friendly reading. And it's not just a mundanely told story. Sebanc's language is well-crafted, even occasionally poetic. He doesn't try to tell a story set in an ancient age by using 20th century colloquial English, which would feel anacronistic. The style of expression he uses has a feel of ancient, vivid strength but is not excessively florid. With the exception of the occasional lapse into expressions or words which are too contemporary, Sebanc's language is an excellent fit for the story's setting. Would that Sebanc's editor had caught those lapses — and the four or five times when a stray comma inadvertantly changes a sentence's meaning or makes it ambiguous. (Eerdmans doesn't usually let mistakes like that slip by.)

How long will we hang?

That aside, my only real beef with this book is that it has been published before the other two volumes have been finished. That may be OK for a multi-volume history or biography where there's no suspense involved in the outcome.

But here we're left hanging in the middle of a story. Sebanc does make a passable effort at bringing the first leg of Kalaquinn's journey to a reasonable conclusion (he's aware the volume will have to stand alone). But it's a tribute to his story-telling ability that that effort doesn't really work, resulting in the reader closing this volume in frustration, knowing it will be a long time before he or she will join Kal again to learn how Middle Earth will be set to rights.

There's no word from Eerdmans on exactly when volumes two and three will appear; it may be a long wait.

CBC-TV and Toronto Star *to focus on religious education*

TORONTO (CPJ) — Citizens for Public Justice has for many years been at the forefront of the ongoing struggle for parental choice and fiscal equity in education. Working with representatives of many different faith communities and independent school groups in coalitions such as the Ontario Multi-faith Coalition for Equity in Education and the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education, CPJ has actively pursued both judicial and legislative recognition of the right of faith and value communities to choose the kind of education their children will receive.

CPJ wants to call readers' attention to some major media coverage which will be given to this issue in the near future:

"God and the Classroom"
The National Magazine
CBC Television
September 16 and 17
CBC Television will air a two-part series on the issue of religious education and public funding as part of The National magazine. The series will be hosted by Lois Sweet.

"Religious Tolerance and Canadian Schools"
by Lois Sweet
Toronto Star
September 14-18
The Toronto Star will publish a five-part series by freelance writer Lois Sweet on the issue of religious education during the week of September 14-18.

Proposed B.C. multilingual TV to start with 15 languages

VANCOUVER (Canadian Scene) — The CFMT-TV proposal for a full-time, over-the-air, commercial multilingual television system in British Columbia will see an investment of $25 million in the community if approved, says A.P. Viner president and chief executive officer of Rogers Broadcasting Ltd.

The system would serve the Lower Mainland of B.C., including the greater Vancouver area and the lower part of Vancouver Island. CFMT-TV's application for a license to establish the station is before the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission and is expected to be heard the week commencing September 23.

The proposed system would broadcast in at least 15 languages to 18 cultural communities and present over 500 hours of local Canadian multilingual programming produced in the Vancouver area each year. Multi-language content would be 60 per cent of total programming, with the remaining 40 per cent in English. The new system would have more than 100 full-time employees and spend more than $5 million annually to support local television production. Prime-time programming would be multilingual. Programming is envisioned to include the following languages or communities: Afghan, Chinese, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Highlights of the programming pledged by CFMT-TV would include the establishment of a new Victoria bureau to report on provincial legislative and government news and developments with a special emphasis on how they affect ethnocultural communities; and live coverage of community events.

The company would also initiate an educational scholarship program with the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

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Church

'Strategic pastoral training' introduced to Mexico's Totonac tribe

Dan Wooding

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. — Two leaders of ASSIST Ministries (Aid to Saints in Strategic Times) have just completed a "strategic pastoral training" course for many of the circuit pastors of the 250,000-strong Totonac tribe which lives in a remote region of Mexico.

Rev. Jerry Bingham heads ASSIST USA's sister-church program in California. Alan Hernandez is director of ASSIST Mexico and leader of the strategic pastoral training program for Latin America. The men traveled together on foot for hours at a time into some of the most isolated areas where the tribe lives. Their purpose was to train local Totonac pastors so that the pastors, in turn, can teach others to plant churches and preach the gospel.

Reinforcing commitment

Dr. Dale Kietzman, chairperson of ASSIST International and the former U.S. director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, initiated the trip. He believes "this pastoral training program could be the answer for evangelizing the entire Totonac tribe."

Bingham says their purpose was "to offer these pastors ... a course that they could initiate in some of these remote pueblos, to train men that live there to pastor in their home pueblos." Bingham is a former missionary to Mexico and Papua New Guinea. "These men of God oftentimes travel by foot for days to shepherd the remote pueblos and minister to their own," he adds.

Bingham explains why he calls the program "strategic training": "These young men cannot leave their families or gardens and attend a Bible institute, so instead they must be able to study at home. This course, which was written for people groups that have not had the opportunity fore education, has been developed by Dr. George Patterson, a Conservative Baptist missionary then working in Honduras, in a rural situation not unlike where the Totonac live."

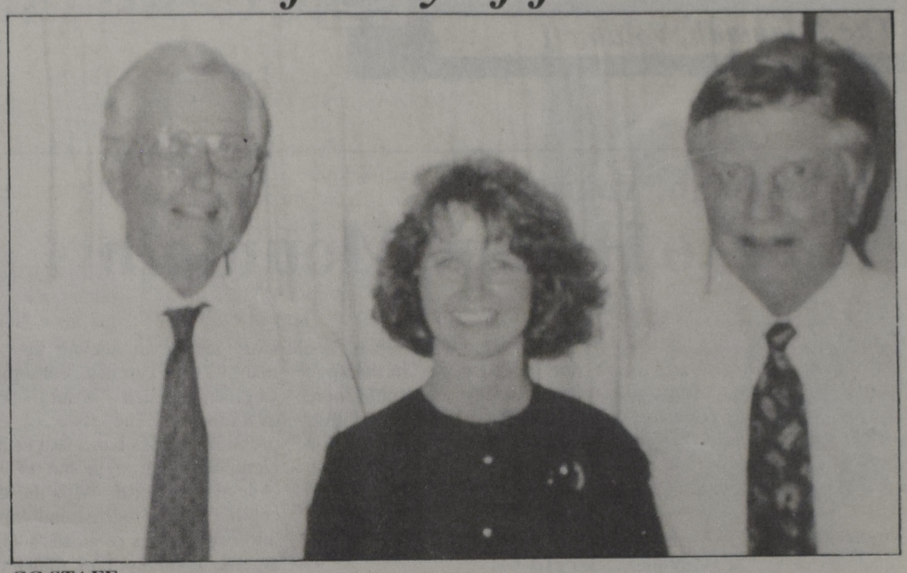
There are 62 single-subject booklets which make up the course. Each booklet takes about a month to complete. "They're non-denominational and very basic, yet very complete," says Bingham.

Bingham and Hernandez were guided through Totonac lands by Felipe Ramos, himself a Totonac and the head of the Totonac Bible Institute in La Union, Mexico. Many nights the men slept in the villages; they were instrumental in getting scores of young adults to sign up for the course. Plans are in hand for Hernandez, who is based in Tecate, to return to the areas they visited to continue with the outreach.

Bingham says, "The response of the pastors was well worth the travels Alan and I made by footpath, straight up one mountain and straight down the other side, across rivers with crude single-file bridges, high humidity and threats of monsoon rains which turned our footpaths into miniature rivers."

He concludes, "God was gracious; we both knew that people were praying for our safe keeping. We also sensed God's perfect timing to introduce this style of pastoral training."

A family of firsts



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TORONTO — Meet three Hofmans, all of them pastors, all of them pioneers. John (l.) and Tymen (r.), who are brothers, born in Alberta, were the first Canadian members of the Christian Reformed Church to be ordained to the ministry. Tymen was ordained in October 1951, and John, in 1952. John's daughter, Ruth, was the first female pastor to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Church of North America, on August 24, 1996. Both Tymen and John are retired and live in Grand Rapids, Mich., while Ruth serves the First CRC of Toronto.

Study: Mormons' teachings against premarital sex don't lead to abnormalities

PROVO, Utah (EP) — A study of members of the Mormon Church has found that religion-based teachings against premarital sexual intercourse do not lead to an abnormal sex life and marriage, as some writers have claimed.

The study found Mormons much more likely than other people to say that premarital sex is unacceptable, but found no significant difference in sexual appetite or sexual conflicts after marriage. Researchers Thomas B. Holman and John R. Harding of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, reported their findings in the September issue of the *Review of Religious Research.*

Holman and Harding noted that a number of writers have suggested that saving sex for marriage could lead to "sexual maladjustment," ranging from reluctance to having sex after marriage to unusually high levels of sexual activity to "make up for lost time."

But the study found no significant differences in the sex lives of married Mormons as compared to non-Mormons. The study also found that people with no religious affiliation reported the most sexual activity and the most conflicts about sex. Liberal Protestants and Jews had the lowest frequency of reported married sex.

Stereo maker's new label includes Christian music

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (EP) — Pioneer Electronics Corporation is launching a new music and entertainment company, Pioneer Music Group, which will include contemporary Christian music (CCM). The label will be headed by Charlie Lico, who was involved in the Liberty/EMI purchase of Sparrow Records, a Christian company.

Lico told the industry newsletter "CCM Update" that the new label "will have the financial resources of a large corporation, but the philosophy of an independent label. It's not about money with us, it's about affecting the culture. We do really want to work alongside the other companies within the Christian marketplace."

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Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
* Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

A feast of remembrance

I am going to attend a reunion with my siblings and their spouses. That will be a feast of remembrance. In fact, some of our spouses feel we do too much remembering and too little discussing of present-day issues. That's probably right. Perhaps all of us sense it is safer to have fun about the past than to risk an argument about present politics or church affairs. We come from the same nest, and all of us are Christians. But in the course of time we have joined different denominations and we have different political ideas.

Remembering is very important. In the Bible God's people are often told to *remember* what God has done for them. In fact, God saw to it that his people had memorials such as the pile of stones at the Jordan (Jos.4:7, "These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever"). What God did there may not be lost from memory.

The Passover is an annual "day to commemorate" (Ex. 12:14, NIV) or a "day of remembrance" (NRSV). Everyone must think on God's mighty work of salvation and punishment. By the story they tell and by the meal they eat the Israelites relive the night when the lamb's blood colored their houses and all of Egypt wailed over the death of the first-born.

More than just 'what happened'

When God asks his people to "remember," he wants more than a mere mention of what happened long ago. By remembering we must enter into the historic reality in such a way that we rediscover our own identity. When the Jewish farmer would bring a basket of the firstfruits to the holy place, he would recite: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people" ...a reference to father Jacob as the farmer's father. Then he goes on to say, "The Egyptians mistreated *us* and made *us* suffer, putting *us* to hard labor. Then *we* cried out to the Lord.... The Lord heard *our* voice and saw *our* misery.... He brought *us* to this place..., and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O Lord have given *me*" (Deut.26:5-10). This man knows his identity: he was in Egypt, beaten and oppressed. And it was he, this farmer, who was delivered by God's mighty hand and given a land flowing with milk and honey of which he now presents the firstfruits.

This is how we must remember: we must relive the historical reality in such a way that we discover our own identity.

Bound up with Jesus

The reunion with my siblings will not be a religious pilgrimage. It will be good to see them. I will hug them and we will talk. We will be happy that, as yet, we are all in the land of the living. I will rediscover my identity as the son of Jacob and Cornelia. But that's not the whole story.

If I were to tell you who I am — my true identity — I should go with you into your or my church building. There is the baptismal font; and there are the words of the new covenant carved into the table: "Do this in remembrance of me."

When you and I take the bread and sip the wine we know that it was for us, not just for Simon Peter, James and John, but for us, for you and me. He died and rose for us. Your and my identity is bound up with Jesus. Never forget who you are.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven, retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., is sorting out what must be remembered and what should be forgotten.

Evangelicals struggle to establish agenda in South Africa

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Last November three evangelical bodies joined to form the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA). After a half year, TEASA is still working to become an identifiable force for South Africa's evangelical Christians.

TEASA was formed in part because the previous organizations represented racial divisions. Its general secretary, Moss Nthla, says that its white and black constituencies have different priorities. For example, mainly white churches call meetings about the growth of pornography, pro-life issues or "March for Jesus" campaigns.

Nthla says that black Christians also consider these problems evil, but there are other concerns. Blacks in Soweto live in an area with the highest murder and crime rate in the world.

"The point is that the average black pastor can't focus that readily on campaigning against (the killing of) unborn life when life of any kind is seriously threatened," Nthla said.

Nthla believes that white evangelicals want to be left alone for the most part. "They don't feel a need to reconcile if it means disrupting the normal pattern of their lives," he added.

So he believes that TEASA members have to work on their relationships to build a common agenda, rather than speaking out on the immediate concerns of some members of the organization.

U.N. panel told Sudan persecutes Christians

GENEVA, Switzerland (EP) — Sudan's Moslem government is persecuting Christians in the south of the country and an Islamic minority in the north, a United Nations panel was told August 8.

John Eibner of the Zurich-based Christian Solidarity International shared first-hand observations he made with a companion during a clandestine visit to Sudan's Beja tribe in early August.

"What we have seen and heard has compelled us to conclude that the National Islamic Front (the ruling party) is pursuing policies designed to destroy the social fabric of the Beja," Eibner told the UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

Christian and animist victims

The Beja are also Muslim, but they practice a "more tolerant and traditional Islam," said Eibner.

Eibner said that although he observed persecution of the Muslim Beja people, the Christian and animist peoples of the south were the primary victims of Sudan's campaign "to transform the multiethnic and multireligious country into a totalitarian state." He said that of a total minority community of perhaps eight million, over one million have been killed and another five million displaced. Also, tens of thousands have been enslaved.

Eibner said Sudan's government has seized fertile land from minority groups, conscripted Beja men to fight Christians and animists in the south, and permitted widespread crime and persecution.

Lutheran publisher sued by its former CEO

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — A dispute between Augsburg Fortress Publishers and former CEO Gary Aamodt became public July 30 when Aamodt filed a lawsuit accusing the Lutheran publishing house and its former board chairman, the Rev. David Tiede, of breach of contract, fraud and defamation. Aamodt says Augsburg broke its commitment to keep him as CEO for 11 years, until he retired. In a counterclaim, Augsburg and Tiede say Aamodt improperly enriched himself at company expense, taking $826,665 in compensation in 1993, of which $548,576 was not authorized by the board. Augsburg Fortress, the nation's third largest church publishing house, is based in Minneapolis, and has suffered financial difficulties in recent years.

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Feature

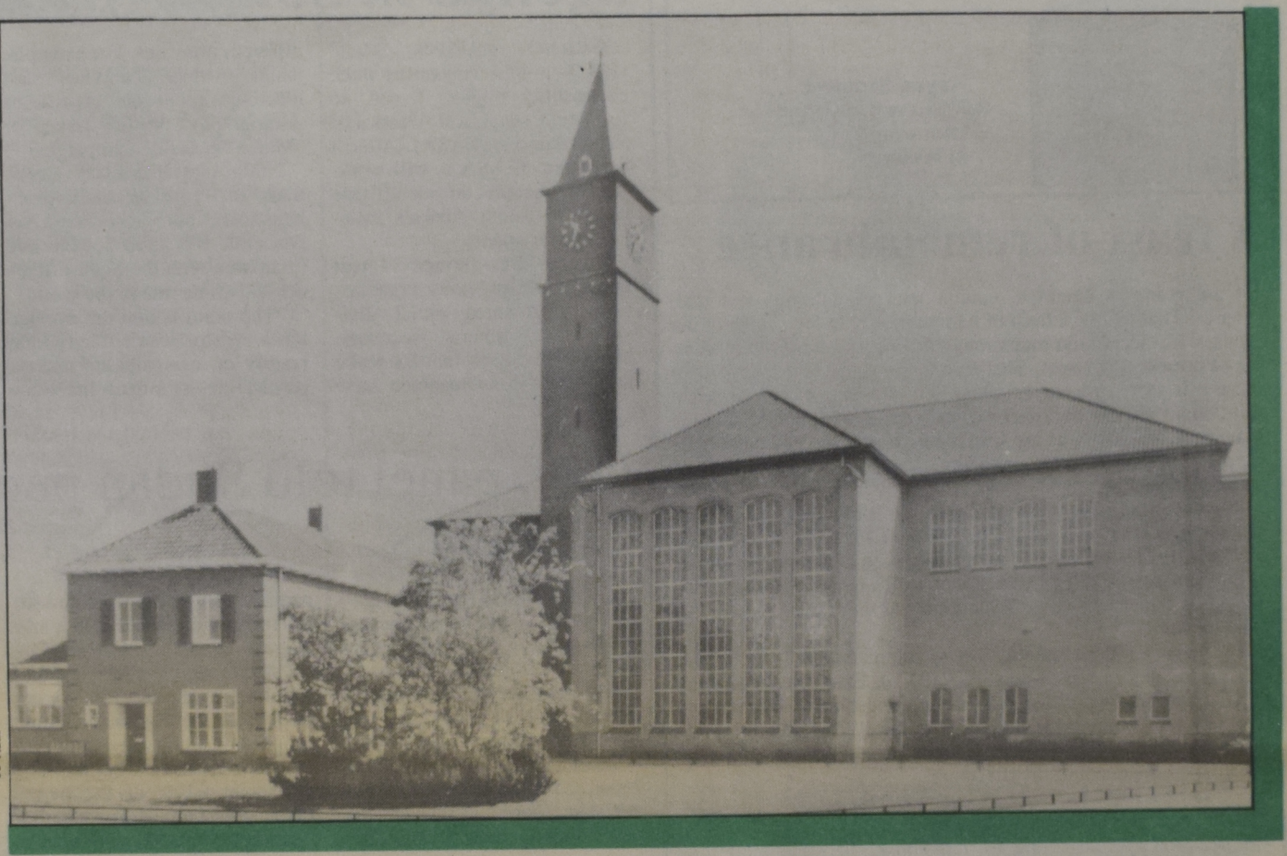
Memories of a Sunday morning in Rijssen

Tymen E. Hofman

It was during our visit to the Netherlands in June of 1996 with my son Ron and his wife Heidi, and their kids that we spent two weeks in a summer cottage in Rijssen, in the province of Overijssel, not far from the German border. On Ron and Heidi's return to Michigan, my wife, Cobi, and I continued our visit, staying with relatives for a week.

We spent the weekend with Grada Landeweerd, also of Rijssen, with whom we had attended the service in the Gereformeerde Kerk the previous Sunday morning. We had been blessed during a very fine service led by Ds. van de Berg, who preached a great sermon. We didn't come early so we had trouble finding places for eight people, indicative of faithfulness of the Rijssen community.

This Sunday, though, I decided to attend the morning service of the Noorde Kerk of the Gereformeerde Gemeente, the mother church of what we in North America know as the Netherlands Reformed Church. I had heard much about this large congregation in one of the most conservative towns in the Netherlands. This church, the largest in the province, seats 1300.



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The Noorde Kerk in Rijssen

Grada told me that I would have to be early to find a place since the members of this church are very faithful in attendance. So she let me out of her car in front of the church at 9 a.m. for the 9:30 service. The bells were ringing as I stepped onto the curb and I noted that there were many cars in the available parking around the church but the people were all still in their cars. No one was entering the church.

Black was the dominant color, but the younger wore lighter shades. Even the little girls wore subdued hats, each hat adorning a long braid, many very blonde. The boys all had fine traditional haircuts. No "long-hairs" or "wierdos" here.

Reserved seats for members

As the bells continued to toll, I noted an old couple, walking, enter the east door. I followed them at a respectful distance but when they took their seats I went up to them and introduced myself (we were the only ones in the church). He was friendly enough and told me he was the former *koster* (janitor). He also informed me that it was *'n leesdienst* (a reading service led by an elder). I told them that though I was a minister of the Christian Reformed Church in North America I could no longer preach due to my health, else I would volunteer to preach for them. Mrs. "Koster" quickly told me that they would not be able to understand me in English, which was to squelch any ideas I might have about preaching for them. When I asked where I could sit she told me they had *vaste plaatsen* (the Dutch equivalent of reserved seats) but that all the seats were free when the red light would go on about 10 minutes before the opening of the service. I thanked them and walked to the back of the church and found a seat in the second row, No. 251. I was not about to stand for 20 minutes; I thought I'd take my chances.

When the bells stopped ringing, the people began to stream into the church. I escaped the first influx of worshippers but at about 9:15 a rather dour elderly woman in a black hat stood at the entrance of my row. I got up to admit her to one of the eight or more empty seats but she, without a word, sat down at No. 251. I moved up one row, to No. 238. I noted a family sitting to my left, with a seat between us. I hardly had time to take stock when I felt a tap on my shoulder and the announcement, *"U zit op mijn plaats"* ("You're sitting in my seat"). I was about to remove myself when the good lady to my left assured me I could have the remaining seat since it would be free. So I sat at No. 237.

Since the man in No. 238 had initiated the conversation I introduced myself as *'n dominee uit Amerika* (a minister from America) to cover my breaking the rules. He informed me their *dominee* was on vacation in America. He didn't know where. I asked him if it cost him something to have his reserved seat. He assured me it did. How much? Not much, he said. 20 *gulden* annually. Do those seated up front pay more? Yes. How much? 30 *gulden*. Some maybe more. You can give as much as you like (with a smile). Conversation over.

A subdued bunch

Everyone over 40 seemed to wear black or grey. The young were more informally dressed. One even came in an orange coat, it being the time of the European Cup in soccer and the Dutch were hoping to win. No mistaking the girls and the boys, since every female wore a hat. Black was the dominant color, but the younger wore lighter shades. Even the little girls wore subdued hats, each hat adorning a long braid, many very blonde. The boys all had fine traditional haircuts. No "long-hairs" or "wierdos" here. The 12-year-old seated next to me was like all the rest. She didn't look my way, though I knew she was watching my every move. That was no doubt true of everyone else in my area. I was sticking out like a sore thumb.

At 9:20 the red light went on above the pulpit in the front of the large soundingboard above which was the organ. The service began promptly with the singing of a psalm which was announced on the song boards to either side of the pulpit. As the singing ended the consistory entered, standing for silent prayer. Several men in the area where I sat also rose for the prayer, one broad-shouldered, thick-necked, large-headed, with short-cropped grey hair, seated two rows ahead of me (at No. 189).

I wondered if they were elders who happened not to be on duty that day, in reserve for the two other services to follow. With each prayer in the service these same men arose. At no time did anyone else stand during the service.

The singing was great, full-voiced, in unison, all of psalms sung in stolid, equal-note

rhythms. The psalmbooks, carried by the worshippers were laid open on the ledge of the pew ahead, constructed for that purpose. I had no book and no one offered me one. When I began to look over to the book of my little neighbor at No. 236, she, during the second number, without looking at me, pushed her book into my direction about two inches. I felt accepted by her.

Several deacons glanced my way but none of them gave me as much as a nod of acceptance or recognition. That was the most disappointing part of my experience in that church.

Two inches and a candy's-worth acceptance

As the service progressed and we got into the sermon, she passed on the roll of candy her mother provided. It turned out to be a generous piece of salty black licorice, which I deposited in my left cheek. I wondered why not a King peppermint, but soon concluded that the black licorice lasts longer than a peppermint and that's important in a service in the Gereformeerde Gemeente, guaranteed at an hour-and-a-half. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

After announcements and the singing of a psalm, the Ten Commandments were read, without comment before or after, but with the singing of a penitential psalm. Then came the congregational prayer. I noted a "tear" in the elder's voice, and a higher pitch, designed to increase the solemnity of the prayer, which was quite lengthy. I peeked between my fingers to check out a few worshippers around me and found my little friend was also peeking. I don't think she saw me. No adult would be caught peeking.

Then came the "collection," to which I contributed as the three-handled bag came to me. I was not ready for bags No. 2 and No. 3, which quickly followed.

The sermon, which began at 10 o'clock, was from 2 Timothy. I confess I found it difficult to follow, likely for several reasons. First, the "tear" factor in the elder's voice escalated, as did the pitch, making it more difficult for me to catch all the words. I was also taking notes, which claimed some of my attention, and the content was not dressed in modern narrative style. It was pretty tough going.

I did note that some others had trouble following the sermon. In the seat a row up and two to my left, a thirtyish man was having trouble with those sharp little jerks that come when your head seems to want to fall, even though you want it to stay steady and well-directed at a 90 degree angle.

A fellow two seats to my left seemed to be able to keep his head stable but his eyes, though open, were drooping so badly I feared they were in danger of falling out.

The man with the small jerks took out a roll of goodies and passed it to his neighbor, but the impact of that seemed to help neither of them. The large head at No. 189 was severely titled to the right and sagging forward, so far, finally, that it nearly disappeared. It stayed there for a long time.

Round 2

At 10:35 we had a break in order to sing a psalm and take another collection. It also brought all the listeners to full attention. With renewed commitment I listened to the application of the sermon. That was easier to follow. I got the message about the evil world, the weak sinner and the judgment of God, and the warning to take heed lest we be swallowed up in the tide of worldliness that threatens us every day.

The sermon spoke of the careless virgins whose oil had run out and who found the door to the banquet hall closed. I was not able to judge the theology of the message but I must confess that I was blessed by what I heard and the seriousness with which the message came.

As this part of the sermon commenced, my little friend at No. 236 passed me another roll of candy, this time a wrapped fruity menthol which I exchanged for the licorice in my left cheek (which I placed in the wrapper and put in my pocket). We were getting along just fine.

After another psalm the reading elder announced the name of the minister who had written the sermon and we all stood up while he prayed a doxology, one I had learned many years ago from the reading services in the Monarch CRC.

O Vader, dat Uw lievd' ons blijk.
O Zoon, maak ons Uw beeld gelijk.
O Geest, zend Uwe troost ons neer.
Drie-eenig God, U zij al d'eer.
(O Father, may we see your love.
O Son, make us over in your image.
O Spirit, send your comfort upon us.
Triune God, to you be all the honor.)

Conservative piety and moral shortfalls

The man of the big grey head stepped into the aisle but no one moved. I had expected to see a round Dutch face and was surprised by the rather sharp features and somewhat foreboding appearance.

At his signal we began to empty out of the pews. I thanked my neighbor for her generosity but failed to get a conversation going. As I stood on the front steps I was quite literally pushed by the crowd and was almost the cause of a lady losing her footing as she descended the steps.

I decided to retreat into the church to check out things which I had not been able to see clearly. There I found the Ten Commandments inscribed on the wall to the left side of the pulpit, and the Apostle's Creed to the right.

As I walked by, several deacons, bringing the collection bags together, glanced my way but none of them gave me as much as a nod of acceptance or recognition. That was the most disappointing part of my experience in that church. I could accept the seating debacle, but not being obviously ignored by fellow Reformed believers serving in the office that represents Christ's love and mercy.

After church we enjoyed the blessing of coffee and pastries at Henk and Heleene van Lindenberg's, Grada's daughter and son-in-law. They had never attended a service in that church and were eager to hear how I had made out. That led to a lot of stories about conservative piety and moral short-falls but also about the challenge of living the faith in our world today. We were impressed by their commitments and their living of the Christian life. Cobi attested to the fine service she had attended in their GKN congregation again this morning.

I was tremendously impressed with the acoustics of the North Church in which I saw no evidence of a public address system. I thought the sounding board was doing it all. Henk investigated this for me and found that there was a microphone on the person of the reader. He also inquired about those standing for prayer and found that it was done by those who "feel a need of it." At one time all the men had stood for prayer, so some change has come even in the Gereformeerde Gemeente in Rijssen.

Dutch church members return home after a service

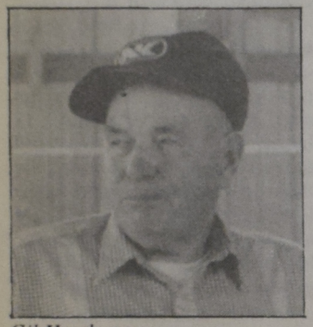
Tymen E. Hofman is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich. He has served churches in Montana, Alberta, California, Michigan and Illinois.

Environment

Wetlands reclamation and goose control projects benefit Ontario farmers and all of us

Marian Van Til

Ducks Unlimited has a less than stellar reputation as a conservation organization among many who seriously care about the environment. Perhaps that's because DU's American counterpart gets much of its support from hunters (DU Canada gets some). Many feel that DU is interested in conserving waterbirds so that its members can turn around and shoot them.



Gil Henderson

While that view is not wholly unjustified, and not every environmental group is equally effective or trustworthy, it's too late in the environmental day for greener-than-thou attitudes.

That said, Ducks Unlimited Canada, with the blessing of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), has developed a land care program worth taking note of.

DU's Ontario Land CARE (Conservation of Agriculture, Resource and Environment) program is benefitting farming operations, the land and the water. The program involves mostly wetland and adjacent lands.

Most wetlands in southern Ontario are in private ownership, explains DU provincial agrologist Calvin Holin. "In order to preserve what is left the Ontario Land CARE program was developed." It provides financial incentives and technical assistance to help farmers conserve their soil and water resources. "There's an intensive upland component," says Holin. "It involves planting native grasses, for example, as part of DU's 'modified agriculture' program. As part of an 'extension program' we try to convince landowners that wetlands are assets, not liabilities."

So DU's first work is in changing attitudes. Many farmers who own wetlands want to drain them and turn them into crop land. DU's program tries to get such farmers to see that wetlands cleanse polluted waters, reduce flooding, stabilize stream flows, prevent soil erosion, recharge ground water and wells, and provide an essential habitat for tens of thousands of species of waterbirds, songbirds, mammals, insects and plants.

Ducks, upon which DU especially concentrates, need a variety of habitats to breed and raise their young. They require shallow water rich in aquatic plants, and insects and seeds for food.

MARIAN VAN TIL PHOTOS, EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED

Wood duck box # 49 on Gil Henderson's farm

The wetlands can be beaver floods, treed swamps, shallow swales, marshes or seasonally flooded ponds. Adjacent uplands are equally crucial. Young birds and mammals need good ground cover to protect them from predators and human disturbance. Ground cover also minimizes soil erosion.

Onandaga Farms in St. George, Ontario, is a splendid example of an agricultural operation and wetlands happily coexisting. Owner Gil Henderson didn't need convincing about the value of wetlands. Unusually, he bought the 600-acre farm with the specific thought of making it as hospitable as possible to wildlife. Yet his operation proves that environmental stewardship can be profitable in more ways than one.

When Henderson bought the farm its acreage was almost entirely in corn. But the land is hilly, which caused severe erosion. There were also numerous low areas and basins — wetlands — which had been drained.

Henderson made a major decision: get rid of the corn, plant hay, turn the rest of the uplands into pasture for Herefords, and restore the wetlands.

No regrets

The wetlands restoration at Onandaga Farms has occurred (and is occuring) in co-operation with Ducks Unlimited. Henderson has no regrets. Nor has his farm manager, John Hill, who admits he wasn't used to this kind of farming.

Hill describes the awe he experiences when at dusk he sits in his hill-top back yard (he lives in one of the several homes on the farm) watching and listening to the wood ducks, teal, herons and countless other species (including, recently, sandhill cranes) settle into the reeds, grasses and buttonbushes of the wetlands for the night. Bullfrogs have returned here, and deer and numerous small mammals show up too. Hill admits he's hooked; the farm is a wildlife oasis which provides a unique kind of joy as well as a very profitable living.

The practicalities of maintaining the wetlands are relatively simple. Henderson's land is fed by underground springs, some of which well to the surface. Ponds are enhanced by water control systems (installed by DU) which provide optimum water levels for both wanted vegetation and duck breeding. (Invasive purple loosestrife is pulled by hand when it appears, and proper water levels keep cattails in check.)

Among the 28 DU restorations at Onandaga Farms since 1977 there are 90 wood duck boxes. About 40 per cent of those are being used, including a few by screech owls. Fifteen of the wetlands areas are surrounded with electric fences to keep the cattle out (also a DU project), with more areas to be fenced in the future. Henderson's cattle still have plenty of access to water.

Electric fences keep cattle out of wetlands

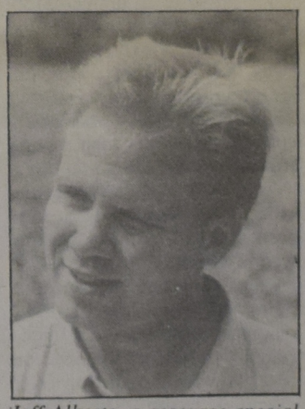
On farms where water isn't so abundant, an alternate system is needed. If necessary, cattle can be given access to one corner of a wetlands pond by putting in a base of stones and erecting an electric fence across the corner at a chosen point.

The fencing is effective and fairly inexpensive. It consists of two wire strands strung on widely spaced wood posts. The first strand is about 20 inches from the ground, the second at three feet. That allows deer to jump over it and prevents fawns from getting caught in it. It gives effective jolts when cattle touch it.

Preventing minced duck

Hay fields attract nesting ducks, which, in turn, create a problem at haying time. So a "flushing bar" is attached to John Hill's haying tractor to flush ducks off their nests. Hill says he's frequently asked by other farmers why they bother with that. When you're committed to the kind of habitat/farming partnership that Onandaga Farms is known for, "you just do it," Hill says. "It's really no trouble, and it's satisfying."

The flushing bar, designed and made by DU, is a horizontal bar which extends some 16 to 20 feet (or whatever customized width) from the tractor front. From it hang vertical swinging bars set about a foot-and-a-half-apart. As the tractor moves, the vertical bars skim through the hay, urging the ducks to vacate their nests before the haybine at the back of the tractor makes mincemeat out of them.



Jeff Alberts, a resource specialist with Ducks Unlimited

The nests aren't always destroyed; if they are, most ducks will start over again. Hill takes the trouble to save abandoned

DUCKS UNLIMITED

A flushing bar saves resting ducks

Flash tape keeps geese out of crops

eggs, bringing them to someone nearby who runs an incubator.

Canada geese not universally loved

Another "bird problem" is caused by the now prodigious numbers of giant Canada geese in Ontario. Farmers (and golf course owners and park superintendents) aren't terribly fond of the majestic-looking, non-migrating *Branta canadensis maximus* that lives in the province year-round, gobbles up succulent spring-time shoots of corn and soybeans (and park and golf course grass) and leaves a lot of goop behind.

Farmers don't mind the "goop" but they do mind the mighty munchers' ability to take out crops. An average three-acre loss of corn is worth about $1000; not a great deal in the scheme of things for most farmers, but annoying, they say.

What to do?

Ducks Unlimited set out to solve this problem, too, and submitted a plan to Ontario's MNR. The plan has two components and the results are now in: both work well.

The first involves "bird-scare flash tape"; the second, a particular type of grass.

The flash tape, it turns out, is virtually fool-proof. It was originally used successfully in the midwestern U.S. and is now distributed in Canada by Eco Electrical Products Inc. in Scarborough, Ont. It's 7/16 inches wide and comes on 250-foot rolls (or 1 1/4" x 200' rolls designed for high wind). It's made of mylar and is shiny red on one side and shiny silver on the other.

The light but virtually unbreakable tape is strung on wooden stakes along the edge of fields which border streams or ponds where the geese like to feed in spring. They don't need corn or soybeans as a food source; they just *like* the stuff, says Jeff Alberts, a resource specialist with DU. "The geese like a high nitrogen, low fiber, high moisture diet." So the crops are attacked when they're young and tender. That's when the flash tape should be up, and it shouldn't be left up past the end of July or the birds may get too used to it.

Alberts prefers stringing two rows of the tape on top of each other, one at virtually ground level, the other about 10 inches above that. The geese *will* not cross the tape, presumably because when it flashes in the sun and wind it looks like fire.

In a DU/MNR project in Blair, Ont., at the Brian Domm farm, Domm used the flash tape this year very successfully. There's a stream, then a 20-foot grass strip, then a corn field edged with flash tape on the side facing the stream. "This is the first year I've had a crop this close to the edge [of the stream]," says Domm. "No matter what kind of tillage practices I used, nothing worked [to keep the geese out] until now."

If one wants to keep geese (and gulls) out of a farm or backyard pond or a yard, the whole pond or area can be enclosed in flash tape. Eco Electrical sells five rolls of tape for $32.87 (less for larger quantities).

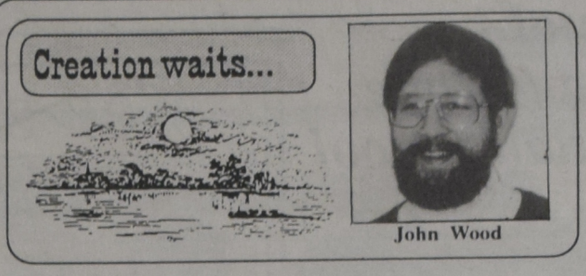
Bent grass becomes the main menu

At another DU test site, the Lloyd and Alan Moore farm near Glen Morris, there is a large pond and wetlands area adjacent to a soybean field. A 40-foot wide buffer zone of grasses was planted between the field and the wetlands. "You're trying to have the grass act as a magnet, as opposed to your field," said Lloyd Moore.

Four types of grasses were alternated to determine which type the geese would like best: a lawn mix (20% perennial rye, 40% creeping red fescue, 40% Kentucky bluegrass); white clover; bent grass; and alphalfa with annual rye. Alberts and the Moores were surprised when the geese showed a marked preference for the bent grass. And they ate the grass instead of Moore's soybeans, proving grass buffers can work. "You just need to adjust to the circumstances to control your situation," asserted Lloyd Moore. The drawback is that the grass has to be mowed.

There were about two dozen farmers, conservationists, government biologists and press people who met at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources office in Cambridge on August 29 to board a school bus to travel to these project sites. (Dozens more were invited but didn't come.)

With all the environmental bad news we've heaped on ourselves it is heartening to see environmental projects that work, that don't pit economics against ecology, and that get "grassroots" citizens involved.



John Wood

Classically Canadian — A vintage Christian environmentalist

It is a stinging rebuke and it still hangs like a black cloud over Christians who are interested in the environment. Christianity has, so the story goes, been the most anthropocentric religion on the planet. In the worse case, Christianity has been used to justify the wholesale destruction of the planet, at best its practitioners are complicit in nature's demise.

Opinion polls over the past decade seem to support this assessment, but a new book by James Raffan, *Fire in the Bones: Bill Mason and the Canadian Canoeing Tradition* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), and recent events reported here tell another story. (See "Are we emerging from an environmental fog?", CC, Nov. 17, 1995; "Shooting the Messenger?", CC, Feb. 18, 1994.) While the mainstream of the church *has* been as slow as the general public on the uptake of contemporary environmental issues, strong voices of Christians who care about the creation have always been present. Bill Mason, who died in the fall of 1988, and his predecessors, Jack Miner ("Wild Goose Jack"), are two of the better known Canadian examples.

The man with one red canoe

Although we might not know his name, few ever forget his checkered shirt, floppy hat and red canvas canoe. The vision of him crashing through the rapids or gliding serenely across a glassy bay have defined canoeing for a generation.

Canadians have a little love affair with canoes; canoes deeply inhabit our collective psyche. Art, literature, history, and even our sense of distinctiveness from the U.S. are wrapped up with these floaters. Canoes are the quintessential Canadian water craft which have come, in part, to define the wilderness.

Bill Mason, in his films and books, worked to make sure that we never loose this love for the canoe. He translated the heritage of Calvin Rustrum to a new generation of recreationalists. For Mason, the canoe was just about the finest device for travelling ever invented.

But his message was more than just go out and enjoy the water in a canoe. Raffan sums it up this way: "Throughout his whole life, careful treatment of the natural world was a religious imperative. To denigrate the natural world was to defy God. To love nature was to love the creator, for God's hand created the natural world" (p.94). From his earliest slide show turned film, "Wilderness Treasure," to the feature film "Waterwalker," Mason showed the knack for not just teaching, but inspiring an audience to action.

Film as his pulpit

Mason's literary and artistic accomplishments, especially in film, have been widely recognized. He received over 60 honors for his work in 18 films, including two American Academy Award nominations, and two British Academy Awards. Seldom preachy, he managed to communicate his love of nature and of its creator into all that he did. Bill's faith, said one friend, "was neither vague nor rudely aggressive, but simply the reference point in his life; the base from which all his work flowed..." (*Fire in the Bones*, Raffan, 1996; p. 78).

But Mason faced the same problem that confronts many Christian environmentalists. How do you share your love of God and for creation with diverse audiences in church and in the field? "In our culture," Mason said, "it's tough to talk about spiritual things." The church crowd wants you to be more explicit about God, and your canoeing buddies say, "Nice film, but I could have done without the sermon" (Waterwalker, 1985).

James Raffan calls Mason an "ordinary hero." The biography presents him as he probably was — a complex person, not perfect, but certainly faithful to his calling. In his own words Mason explained his passion: "My obsession has been to share the wonder and infinite beauty of the world God has created and to help people develop an appreciation and concern for it. My optimism is rooted in my faith that God has not forsaken us. My relationship with God is in his son Jesus Christ, and with a relationship like that there's really not a lot that can go wrong" (*Fire in the Bones*, p. 265). Not a bad conclusion for a life of faith.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

News

New commercial location a dream come true for Christian school

CC FILES

Trinity Christian School's new location

Bert Witvoet

CALGARY — Trinity Christian School has moved into its new location in Midnapore, a southern suburb of Calgary. The new facility is a three-storey office building with about 50,000 square feet of floor space. The school occupies the lower floor, which includes a small gymnasium two storeys high.

The building was purchased last year by the school and a medical group. The school association assumed a one-third share of the property. In addition the school bought a 2.5 acre property next door for additional playground and parking use.

God's hand at work

"All the way I kept seeing God's hand in it," says Doug Walker, board chairperson of the Association for Christian Schooling in Calgary South. "Board members are elated that God opened a door for them to purchase a beautiful, existing building. Its residential location in Midnapore is central and accessible from surrounding new development areas and via Highway 2 from satellite towns like Okotoks and High River."

The school had a small beginning with 33 children (grades K-4) three years ago, and has now grown to six teachers, 80 students and 50 in-home schooling students. Members of the association come from 21 different local churches.

Hank Verhoeff, enthusiastic supporter of the school, supplies the following data taken from an article in the *Calgary Herald* of August 16, 1996:

*Public school enrolment has been stagnant for several years.

*Alberta has over 150 independent/private schools, 50 of which, with 16,000 students, are in Calgary and area alone.

*The number of Alberta children being taught at home has increased 35-fold in the last 10 years, to 7,200 students from 200. About 700 students are home schooled in Calgary.

*"Calgary's public school board continues to lose students to the Catholic system, private schools and home schooling," admits Jenefer Pollock, the head of the public board.

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Advice

Peter and Marja

are IN

Submitting to God's will brings spiritual peace

Dear P & M:

If one looks at his or her life and says, "I will never find peace living like this," should that person forever try to fight these earthly things and therefore find no peace because he or she is fighting? Where does God come in? I'm 16.

Dear Not Finding Peace:

What "earthly things" are you fighting? It would help us to know because then we could advise you more specifically. Are you tired of living under parental rules? Are you struggling with the urge to drink alcohol or to overeat? Are you wrestling with sexual impulses that demand expression? Are you overwhelmed by the stress of school?

In our experience the happiest people are those who have a good sense of what God wants and who they are. Surrendering to God's will brings spiritual peace. Accepting your own personality and talents brings emotional and psychological peace.

Some fighting is good. After all, we should fight anything that is godless and hurtful. We should struggle to control our tempers, our spending habits and our sex lives. If something is sinful, giving in to it may scratch an itch and bring some momentary relief, but it won't bring peace.

But life should not feel as if you're forever fighting. This sounds to us like a symptom of depression. For that reason we want to urge you to talk to a trustworthy, understanding adult. With this person, be very specific in naming the "earthly things" that trouble you so. You may discover that you have been battling with a lot of false guilt over feelings, activities and desires which are natural and important to accept.

Let us illustrate this with two examples.

Donovan Bailey, 1996 Olympic gold medalist in the 100 metres, began training seriously only three years ago. Before that he graduated from university and had started a small business. His struggle was with his dad, who initially could not support Donovan's desire to be a world-class runner. You could hardly blame Donovan's dad. After all, only the tiniest percentage of serious athletes can actually make a living from the sport. But the "earthly thing" that Donovan always fought turned out to be the God-given talent that led to his amazing 9.84 seconds world record in Atlanta. When he stopped fighting his gift, he experienced the peace of doing what was right for him, even though it meant more parental disapproval and the hard self-discipline of athletic training. Today his father is one of his biggest supporters. Donovan would be the first to say that his dad's values (finishing your education, working hard at making an honest living) are also extremely important and helpful to him, especially now.

Our second example is a little different. Five years ago we wrote a column about masturbation (April 19, 1991) in which we frankly said that "masturbation is a form of sexual expression and release that young people stumble upon, single persons maintain throughout their lives and married folks resort to during work- or health-related separations." We also went on to write that "nowhere is masturbation prohibited in the Bible and we may safely assume that it is as common to single sexuality as sexual intercourse is to marriage." A number of months after that column appeared we found ourselves in conversation with a gentleman in his 60s who told us that that particular column had been a profound blessing to a young male friend. For years, this young man felt so much guilt about the fact that he masturbated. It was a huge relief to him to realize that he was doing nothing wrong.

Hopefully these two examples will help you to examine more closely the nature of your struggle with earthly things. Sometimes we find ourselves fighting the very things that God invites us to develop (Donovan's talent for running) or experience (sexual release through masturbation). So if it's godless, ask the Lord for the strength to resist. But if it's godly, God-given and a good fit for the person God created you to be, ask him for his blessing and save your fighting for other battle zones.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

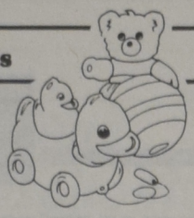
Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

ATTENTION!

When you fax your display or classified ads to us (particularly obituaries), please type them and check spelling *BEFORE* you transmit the text.

Thank You.

Births



vanStaalduinen:

With great joy Rob and Ingrid announce the birth of their son

JOSEPH TYLER

Born on Aug. 14, 1996, in Brampton, Ont. A brother for Jacob.

Proud grandparents are Ray and Diane vanStaalduinen of Burlington, Ont., and Harry and Jane Bovenberg of Huttonville, Ont.

"Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children are a reward from Him" (Ps.127:3).

Home address: 66 Chatsworth Drive, Brampton, ON L6X 2L9

Thank You

JOOSSE:

We were humbled by the numerous greetings of love and well-wishes through cards, letters, telephone calls and physical embrace during our recent 50th wedding anniversary celebration. The presence of our seven children and their spouses, as well as our 15 grandchildren, formed a most beautiful centre-piece of it all. A powerful symphony of praise to God for his faithfulness. Hearty thank you to all participants.

James and Lena Joosse
Ingersoll, Ont.

Marriages

BERGSMA/VANDERSLUIS:

Through the light of Christ's love.

Mr. and Mrs. George and Shirley Bergsma request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter

DOREEN JULIE
to
CAREL WILLEM JR.

son of Mr. and Mrs. Carel and Reiny VanderSluis on Saturday, Sept. 28, 1996, at 2:30 p.m., D.V., at the Chr. Ref. Church, 11611 Trafalgar Road, Georgetown, Ont.

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.

Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Anniversaries

Brampton Belleville
1971 September 18 1996

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt.6:33).

GILBERT and HELEN HUIZINGA
(nee SCHUILENBERG)

Thanking God for His love, care and faithfulness, we hope to celebrate with our children, grandchildren, family and extended Christian community our 25th wedding anniversary. We praise God that each one has enriched our lives and been a real blessing to us. We thank all of them for their love and continued support. Our children:

Ken & Wendy Huizinga — Samia, Ont.
Corey, Danielle
Steve Huizinga — Whitby, Ont.
Greg Huizinga — at home

Address: R.R. #5, Belleville, ON K8N 4Z5

1956 September 14 1996

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents or Opa and Grandma

MURRAY and DOREEN SIERTSEMA
(nee DYKSTRA)

May God continue to bless you and keep you in His care.

Congratulations and love from all of us.

Bert & Betty-Ann Siertsema
Albert, Lee, Emi
Mike & Deb Siertsema
Luke, Mark, Meghan, Natalie
Steve Siertsema
Mike & Anita Langdon
Mitchell, Nicholas
Darin & Yolanda Culbert
Evan, Jade, ?

Relatives and friends are invited to share in their celebration at an open house at the Chr. Ref. Church in Blyth, Ont., on Sept. 14, 1996, from 2-4:30 p.m.

Best wishes only.

Address: Box 368, Blyth, ON N0M 1H0

Personal

Attractive, full-figured, active 55-year-old **seeking Christian companion** for long-term relationship, **friendship first.** Call **Barbara at (905) 774-6147.**

Active **single 40-year-old blonde,** loves sports and church activities, seeking male with similar age and interests. **Call Eve at (905) 774-4356.**

Anniversaries

1956 October 6 1996

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Ps.127:1). With thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

BERT and JENNY SMIT
(nee MYNHEER)

With love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren.

Pat & Herman Vanderkooy — Guelph, Ont.
Jennifer, Anna, Helen
Marg Smit — Hamilton, Ont.
Jack & Pauline Smit — Smithville, Ont.
Robert, Melanie, Julia

We invite you to share with us in celebrating this special occasion at an open house on Saturday, Oct. 5, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at Smithville Covenant Chr. School, 6470 Regional Rd. 14, Smithville, Ont.

Home address: 12 Garden Dr., Smithville, ON L0R 1A0

Obituaries

"Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven" (Matt.5:12a).

Adorp, the Neth. London, Ont.
April 30, 1925 - Sept. 2, 1996

Suddenly, on the first Monday of September, the Lord took home to be with Him our mother and grandmother

HARMINA HELMUS

in her 72nd year.

Comforted by our certain knowledge that she, by grace through faith in Christ, is home with the Lord are her family;

Lucy & Bill Veenstra — Maple Ridge, B.C.
Nathan, Mark, David
Dirk & Diane Helmus — Ottawa, Ont.
Trevor, Jay, Leslie

The funeral took place on Friday, Sept. 6, 1996, at the First Chr. Ref. Church, London, Ont.

Correspondence address:
Lucy Veenstra, 20886 Alpine Ave., Maple Ridge, BC V4R 2M3 or
Dirk Helmus, 278 Baldwin St., R.R.#1, Woodlawn, ON N0A 3M0

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Teachers

COBOURG, Ont.: Northumberland Chr. School is in need of a **primary teacher** from January through June 1997 (maternity leave). Special consideration given to applicants having familiarity with or experience teaching using "Math Their Way," and the "Association Method" (Northampton Charts). Interested persons should send letter of inquiry and c.v. to:

Rick Nonnekes, Principal
Northumberland Chr. School
R.R.#5, 8861 Danforth Rd.
Cobourg, ON K9A 4J8

JARVIS, Ont.: Jarvis District Chr. School invites applications from **qualified teachers for a maternity leave position** for Grade 5 effective Feb. 3 through June 27, 1997.

JDCS has nine classrooms, a full-time resource program, a staff of 12 and 230 students. All letters of application, resumes, inquiries, etc., should be sent prior to **Oct. 4, 1996,** to:

Garry Glasbergen, Principal
Jarvis Distr. Chr. School
P.O. Box 520
Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0
Phone numbers:
(519) 587-4444 (school)
(519) 587-2985 (fax)
(905) 765-7919 (home)

Job Opportunities

Social Service Work - Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.**

The responsibilities of this **live-in position include involvement in educational programming, scheduling daily routines, and child supervision,** within a family structured environment. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to **Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, P.O.Box 397, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 or call (905) 892-4332.**

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Classifieds

Job Opportunities | **Job Opportunities** | **Miscellaneous**

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Business Administration: management and marketing or other areas

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History: American history, with a background in Native American and Latin American history

Theology: Introductory and upper level courses

Specific job descriptions are available. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to **Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; 498 4th Ave. NE; Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697. Tel.: 712-722-6333; facsimile: 712-722-4496; e-mail; vpaa@dordt.edu**

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution and encourages the nominations and candidacies of women and minorities.

SEEKING A PASTOR

Emmanuel Chr. Ref. Church of Calgary, Alta., is seeking a **pastor** who can provide leadership for a staff ministry that includes one other pastor, elders, deacons and the entire congregation.

Emmanuel Chr. Ref. Church is surrounded by a diverse community and neighborhood with multiple opportunities for service. Our congregation has about 150 families (total population about 600), and is a microcosm of the denomination in the diversity of views and common desire to serve our Lord, each other and the community.

If you feel God may be calling you to serve his kingdom in this church, please send your inquiries or profiles to:

A.H. Brander, 201 Woodford Close S.W., Calgary, AB T2W 6E1
Phone: (403) 238-4496 or (403) 218-6606 Fax: (403) 205-9033

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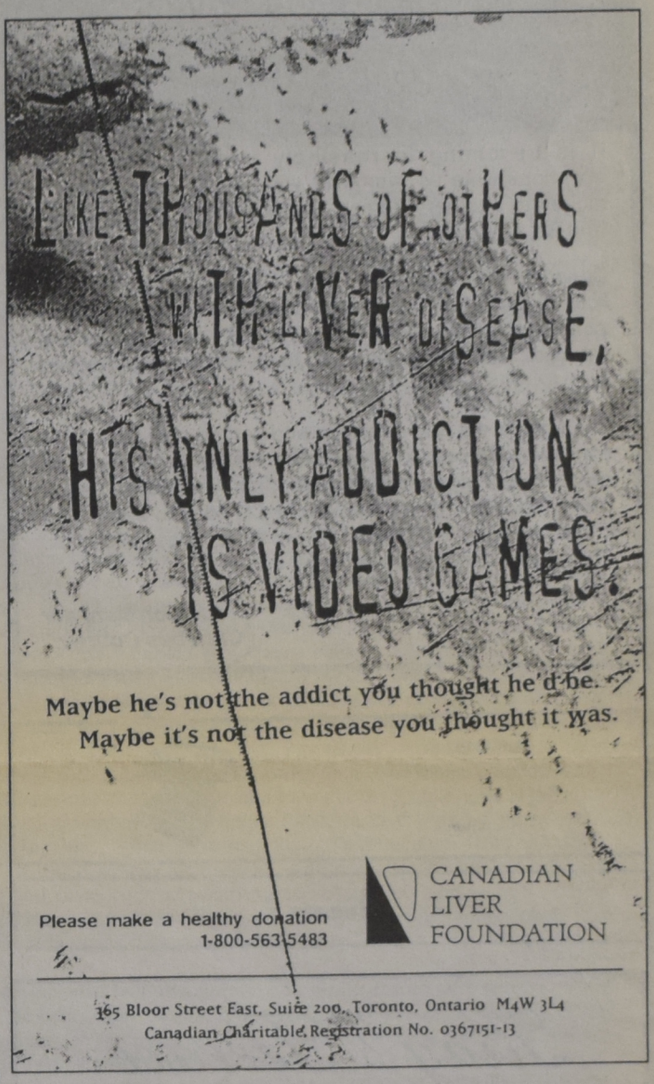
1000 Balfour St., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0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Miscellaneous

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City: _____ Prov.: _____ Code: _____

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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

New address is in effect
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(Date)

Send your questions to **Peter and Marja.**

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Events/Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Events	Events

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The fines are a real nuisance and can be substantial. So we need your help to avoid them. We kindly ask for your co-operation in promptly notifying us. And please take a minute to check the label on your CC copy to see if your current address is correctly shown. If not, please inform us. **Thank you for your continuing support!**

Circulation Manager
Christian Courier.

St. John Ambulance First Aid and Safety Tips

What is an emergency?

(NC)—Talk to your children about emergencies and discuss specific examples. Explain that there are many different types of emergencies. Talk about what to do if:

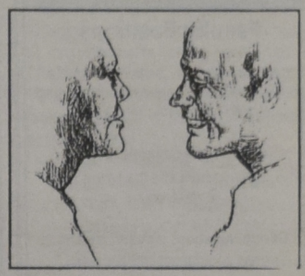
- they lose a favourite toy
- the cat gets stuck in a neighbour's tree
- a friend falls and cuts his knee
- mommy and daddy falls down and can't get up
- they see a fire in the house

Teach your children basic safety rules. Very young children can learn to recognize dangerous situations. They can also understand what they should do in an emergency. As children grow, give them more and more responsibility. Get them involved in your regular safety check-ups.

St. John Ambulance teaches first aid, CPR and health promotion with an emphasis on safety and injury prevention. For more information, contact your local St. John Ambulance branch.

A story to tell...

A day of training and encouragement for deacons and other caregivers



Saturday, Oct. 19
At John Knox Chr School , Brampton, ON
Cost $35

- **16 workshops, 15 seminars,15 info sessions**
- **two all day sessions:** "Growing in the grace of giving" and "Developing diaconal outreach ministry"

For registration forms, contact your deacons or Diaconal Ministries (905) 646-4511

Interested in placing an ad? Get in touch with us for details.

Events

King's Terrace

The Salem Christian community has been busy listening to area seniors about what residential features they desire in order to live independently longer. King's Terrace will offer adults 55 years of age and older a unique option and opportunity for capital appreciation similar to a private home, plus the comforts of services and design features that meet changing needs, all within a Christian community.

See Why King's Terrace Is Today's Option

Saturday, September 21, 1996
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Second Christian Reformed Church
444 Steeles Avenue West, Brampton

For more information contact:
Dan Van Beilen, 53 Hartford Trail, Brampton, ON L6W 4J9
(905) 457-1308

Events

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Sept. 14 39th Annual Ontario CRC School Convention, Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info.: Ria Heeringa, phone (905) 643-4959, fax (905) 643-6827.

Sept. 14 LDCSS Alumni Picnic, 2-6 p.m. (rain or shine) at the school, **London,** Ont. Info.: (519) 455-4360 or fax: (519) 455-4364 (#)

Sept. 21 Annual "Camp Shalom Fall Fair," 10 a.m.-4 p.m., R.R.4, **Cambridge**, Ont. Admission: canned goods for the local food bank. Lots to do for young and old, and great food! Watch for ad. For info. call John and Irene at (905) 689-8062 (#).

Sept. 21 Ashley Cleveland, 1996 Grammy award winner, in concert, 8 p.m., Jubilee Fellowship CRC, 13 Wilholme Dr., **St.Catharines**, Ont. With guitarist Kenny Greenberg. Doors open at 7 p.m. For tickets call Judi at (905) 892-6434.

Sept. 25 Celebration and open house in honor of the retirement of Rev. and Mrs. Peter and Anne De Bruyne, 7:30 p.m., Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby**, Ont. Rev. De Bruyne will preach his farewell sermon at 9:30 a.m., on Sunday, **Sept. 29**, at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby**, Ont. (#)

Sept. 28 "Praise and Worship Conference" with Grace and Colleen, First CRC, 310 Kingscourt Ave., **Kingston, Ont.** Info.: (613) 542-8350 or 389-5050.

Sept. 29 Youth service featuring the Christian contemporary rockband "His Band," 6:30 p.m., First CRC, 310 Kingscourt Ave., **Kingston**, Ont. Everyone welcome! Info.: (613) 389-4185.

Oct. 3 Open house and welcome for Rev. and Mrs. George and Frieda Van Arragon, 2:45 p.m., Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont. Rev. Van Arragon will be installed as Chaplain at 9:30 a.m., on Sunday, Oct. 6, at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont.

Oct. 6 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Oct. 19 A day of training and encouragement for deacons and other caregivers at John Knox Chr. School, **Brampton**, Ont. (9 a.m.-4 p.m.). Theme: "A story to tell...." Over 30 workshops to choose from. Cost $35. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or call Diaconal Ministries at (905) 646-4511 (#).

Oct. 26 Christian Rainbows Fellowship-sponsored special meeting, 10 a.m., **Ingersoll**, Ont. Speaker: Mr. W.J. MacPhee, publisher of *Schizophrenia Digest*. Pre-reg. required $7.00. Info.: (905) 639-1075 or (519) 631-0307.

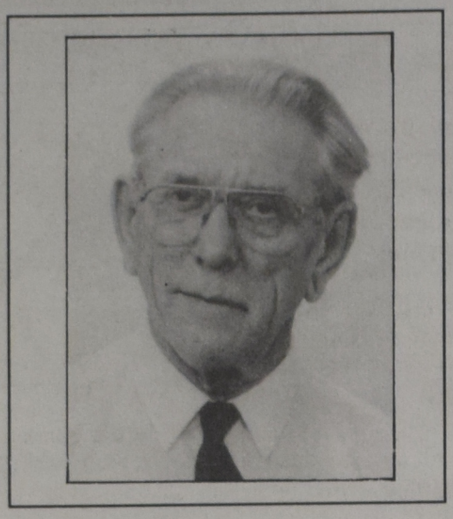
Oct.30-Nov.2 "Free to Serve," celebrations will be held **Oct. 30:** Jubilee Auditorium, **Edmonton**, Alta., and **Nov. 2:** Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. For details, see ad in C.C., Sept.6/96 (#)

Nov. 1 "Christian Festival Concert," by the choirs and brass of the Ontario Chr. Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Also featuring Andre Knevel and Sander Van Marion (organ and piano) and Marjorie Ginczinger, soprano. A truly exciting event! Tickets/info.: (416) 636-9779 (#).

Nov. 10 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Dec. 15 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Peter Van Egmond, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster,** Ont.

Changing the lives of people less fortunate



When he was a seven-year-old in Dussen, in Noord-Brabant, Holland, Casey Van der Stelt began to be drawn to people who lived in poverty or who were troubled in other ways. He empathized with their plight and wanted to help. Someday, he promised himself, he would be in a position to do something, anything, to ease the personal pain of people in distress.

In 1948, when he was nineteen and single, he emigrated to St. George, north of Brantford. He worked on a farm and later took factory and construction jobs. But deep in his heart, he felt that he was in the wrong place, that he should really be with people who were struggling with serious and deep-seated problems.

"In the early 1950s," recalls Van der Stelt, one of the best-known prison volunteers in southern Ontario, "I went on my own to visit a number of people in sanatoriums and hospitals and on Indian reserves, and also once in the jail in Simcoe, all of whom hardly ever got any visits. After that, some people came to see me. And when I served as an elder of my church — the Christian Reformed Church in Brantford — people who were deeply troubled came to see me outside my official function. As time went on, I began to think, 'Hey, why not go back to school and get some more education and insight into human nature?'" He studied for nearly two and a half years at the Reformed Bible College and at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., to prepare himself for work among troubled people, but left the course because, lacking a high school education, he couldn't cope with three foreign languages.

He returned to carpentry work. In 1960, he set up his own construction company in Brantford, specializing in institutional, commercial and industrial work, and developed it into a successful business. "But I continued to run across people with troubles — people I worked for and worked with. There also came a time when I asked myself, 'Well, you like to help other people the best you can, but what about yourself?' A much experienced psychotherapist helped me discover who I really was and to see a measure of imbalance and brokenness in my own life that needed healing first. Then in 1983 I had a special dream that changed my whole life. It was short and obscure. But with the help of my therapist, it became crystal clear to me within ten minutes that from now on my task was to help people, mostly behind prison bars, by helping them to discover their inner self."

He began working with inmates at the Burtch Correctional Centre, south of Brantford, on a part-time basis. The Brantford Jail was added to his stops next, and later also the Guelph Correctional Centre and the Niagara Regional Detention Centre in Thorold. In time he gave up his construction business to become a full-time volunteer.

At first, he carried on with the financial support of a number of friends. Then he set up a registered charitable organization, Self-discovery of Imprisoned Persons, which is financed by donations from private individuals, businesses, twenty-four congregations and some ex-inmates, and is overseen by a board of directors. His gentle nature, non-judgmental character and openness encourage prisoners to open their hearts. For hours on end, he listens as they relate stories of traumatic childhoods, failing marriages and desperation, and sometimes even confess to crimes. "I do not aim to correct people, nor to preach to them, nor to teach them, but I aim to help them discover their underlying problems for themselves," says Van der Stelt, a resident of Hamilton since 1977. "If I give them the total gift of myself and unconditionally accept them as equal human beings — imperfect like me — who are all in need of divine forgiveness, I can help them communicate."

With the full endorsement of jail officials, he conducts group sessions and one-on-one follow-up meetings. So far, he has listened to and shared what he describes as "a number of experiences of God's grace and healing in my own life" with approximately two thousand prisoners. He's also prepared to accompany them to court or parole board hearings and assist in readying them for their return home. In fact, he'll do almost anything to help angry, desperate people gain control of their lives through self-understanding. Van der Stelt can give inmates love and caring, but he is limited in what he can do to fix psychological problems. He encourages them to seek further, more experienced professional help.

His work has brought great appreciation. One inmate wrote: "Through our sharing experiences, I've learned how to deal effectively with my emotions of jealousy, anger, and bitterness. Instead of being destructive, I've changed these feelings into a positive force, and ultimately a force for truth." Another commented: "I no longer blame society for my problems or being in jail. Attending the meetings allows me to search my inner being and remove some of the rotten parts bit by bit until I can function once more as a meaningful part of the community." And another: "It's no fun to be trapped in a prison within yourself. You and I know this. I'm glad you, Casey, held the key to break out." And still another: "I consider Casey more than just a social worker; he is a friend. In fact, although Casey has no degrees of any kind, I have experienced him as a psychologist because he got into my heart and mind and helped me discover many roots of my problems. Not only that, but he has also helped me to face them head-on, deal with them and in a measure, overcome them. I can honestly say that, with Casey's help, I have gained a much better balance and wholeness between my physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health. He has made a difference in my life." Then there was this communication from a federal prisoner: "With much love, commitment, patience and the ability to listen effectively — and share your personal experiences openly and humbly — you have allowed God to touch and change many lives, even mine, which was hate-filled, and utter chaos. I am so grateful, Casey."

Van der Stelt has also won recognition and praise from many people on the other side of the bars. After observing the program, Dr. Joel Nederhood of the Back to God Hour, an international radio program of the Christian Reformed Church, stated: "Apparently God has given Casey a gift of psychological healing." And his psychotherapist once said: "As a result of Casey's respectful attentiveness to well over a thousand of his dream messages over the last fourteen years, I have seen him grow from a good man into a deep, wise person, sought out by others for the inspiration and love he brings to them."

The plaudits make Van der Stelt even more determined to carry on with his work. He says: "I have no intention to ever retire from sharing the Good News of healing, forgiveness and restoration with the countless twisted and broken lives."

* * *

The above is an excerpt from the soon-to-be-published book, The Dutch Touch, *written by Albert Vander Mey and published by Martin A. Mol. If all goes well, the book will come off the press during the winter of 1996/97. This article is sponsored by* ***DCA Travel Services, Inc.****, Willowdale, Ont. Phone 1-800-667-2525.*

Anyone wishing to know more about this ministry, should write to:

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News

Development agency in Nepal learns to work with women

KATHMANDU, Nepal (MCC) — Amid panoramic mountain peaks that attract adventure-seeking trekkers from around the world, Nepalese women toil in their terraced fields. As they press rice seedlings into the soil, they worry whether the crop will yield enough to feed their families. But, although much of the farming in Nepal falls to women, when United Mission to Nepal (UMN) offered agricultural training, few women attended.

Nepalese women have little opportunity to attend school. But when UMN, of which Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a member, offered academic scholarships, few females applied.

Therein lies the dilemma: How can an aid agency develop programs that assist women, who tend to be the "poorest of the poor" in Nepal?

Combatting negative messages

In 1990 UMN created the Advisory Group on Nepali Women to ensure its 35 health, education and development programs meet women's special needs. To show its importance, the advisory group was placed structurally under the executive office. Results of the group's work are beginning to show.

The UMN agricultural training program was made "women friendly" by shortening the sessions so women could attend while juggling their many family responsibilities. The training seminars are held closer to villages; when overnight travel is required, UMN staff reassure families that women will have a safe place to sleep. Now nearly 25 per cent of participants are female.

UMN's educational program reserves half its scholarship for women, but staff have to find ways to encourage women to ask for these. This requires "work on so many different levels," says Dorothea Vestal, a UMN staffperson from Norway who works with the advisory group.

In Kathmandu, Nepal's capital, UMN has helped establish a YWCA. One room is reserved for some 20 schoolgirls to come and do their homework daily from 4 to 6 p.m. UMN also works to combat the negative messages Nepalese women receive. Some Nepalese proverbs, for example, compare women to shoes, considered low and dirty, or to dogs. UMN has produced a calendar that shows women in positive roles — one month depicts women voting in an election, another a women learning to read.

UMN staff acknowledge some people find the advisory group's activities threatening. But Edgar Metzler, UMN executive director, asserts, "The best way to address family's and community's needs is to give women more opportunities and help them raise their status.

And he adds, "From a Christian standpoint, it is much better for children to grow up in a family where the mother is seen as more than a slave or a workhorse."

Within the vast UMN network, made up of expatriates from 39 agencies in 18 countries and some 2,000 Nepalese staff, workers find informal ways to assist women. For example, Nepalese women who suffered from incontinence after difficult deliveries were often abandoned by their husbands. The simple operation that could alleviate the problem was unavailable to them, dooming them to a life of hardship.

Progress brings challenges

Today a UMN-affiliated hospital offers the surgery. Nepalese women in the town of Tansen embroider cards to earn income for themselves. Women in Europe sell the cards and a portion of the proceeds helps pay expenses for Nepalese women who need the operation.

As women make some progress, new challenges emerge. More Nepalese are moving to cities, and alcohol, traditionally used in festivals and weddings, is now being consumed more frequently. Consequently, domestic abuse is increasing. As in many Asian countries, AIDS infections in Nepal are on the rise, proving deadly for women lured into prostitution. And the custom of dowry is being adopted from nearby India. This can lead to abuse when the woman's family is unable to pay.

But ultimately the best hope lies within Nepalese women themselves. "More and more Nepalese women are daring to ask for advice," Vestal notes.

Christian worldview Toronto theatre offers expanded productions

COURTESY BROOKSTONE PRODUCTIONS

The White Queen (Laurie Anne Levier) in Brookstone's stage version of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Artistic director Dennis Hassell of Brookstone Performing Arts in Toronto has just announced the first full season program of plays in Brookstone's history.

The first of the three plays to be mounted is "Godspell Unplugged," an acoustical version of the wildly successful musical of the '70s, now tuned for the '90s. The second play is "The Miracle Worker," the poignant drama about Helen Keller. The third is Hassell's adaption of "The Wind in the Willows," taken from the book by that name written by Kenneth Grahame.

Each play is to run for four weeks, and the company has put together attractive subscription packages. Brookstone has developed a reputation for presenting exciting professional theatre, whether plays are original or high quality adaptions.

In past years Brookstone's presentations have included "The Diary of Adrian Plass," "Dixie Gospel," and "The Gift of the Magi." Its latest production was "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." The plays are presented at historic Elmore's Hall on Lowther Street.

Brookstone was founded by Hassell in 1988 as a theatre to explore spiritual experience from a Christian worldview. Hassell is a graduate of the theatre program of the University of Alberta and worked at Lamb's Players Theatre in San Diego before coming to Toronto.

Reformed players

Among those active with Brookstone are Redeemer College graduates Rebecca Neutel, who is production stage manager, and Joel Bootsma and Vaughn Gowling, who share the position of house manager. Daniel Van Heyst of The King's University College in Edmonton is an advisor. Sarah Posthumus, who is majoring in theatre at York University, is assistant director. Kathryn Posthumus, who goes to First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto, is a member of the Brookstone board.

Those interested in further information can call (416) 922-1238.

Health Digest

Save yourself from choking

If you were ever to choke on food when no one is around to help you, you might save yourself via the self-administered Heimlich manoeuver: make a fist and place the thumb side against your abdomen, slightly above the navel. With the other hand, grasp the fist and press it in and upward with quick, sharp thrusts.

Another method: press your abdomen (just below the ribs) forcefully against the back of a chair, table, sink or railing. Repeat until air is forced through and the food is expelled.

Australians combat the sun

Australia has high ultra-violet radiation levels which are still rising due to continued ozone depletion over the Southern Hemisphere. That, coupled with a highly sensitive population (a large proportion of which are of fair-skinned northern European stock) and the cult of the sun-bronzed Aussie, gives Australia the highest skin cancer incidence and mortality in the world: two out of three will be afflicted.

But a 16-year-old sun-safety campaign, aimed especially at children and teenagers, seems to be succeeding. Most primary schools require kids to wear hats and/or stay out of the sun during peak hours; more trees are being planted in schoolyards, at beaches and other public places. And many arriving tourists are handed brochures warning about the sun's dangers. More important, attitudes are changing. It's now considered an embarassment to return from a holiday with a sunburn, and a deep tan may draw derisive comments.

Goat meat not just for 'old goats'

Goat is one of the most widely consumed red meats in the world, and goat consumption is increasing in both the U.S. and Canada. That's thanks to the rising numbers of immigrants to North America from the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

Well, if the thought of eating goat doesn't bother you, is the meat good for you? It's quite lean — about three grams of fat in 3.5 ounces. That's less than half the amount found in the leanest cuts of beef or pork.

Information provided by the University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, *July, Aug. and Sept. 1996.*